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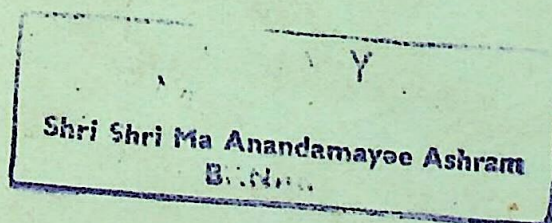


SRI AUROBINDO

SAVITRI

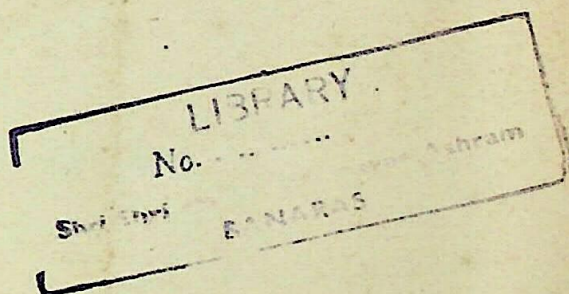
A Legend and a Symbol

Part II

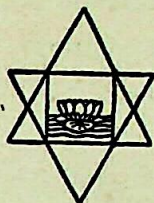


Rs. 15/-

9/95-







SRI AUROBINDO

SAVITRI

A Legend and a Symbol

PARTS TWO AND THREE

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM
PONDICHERRY

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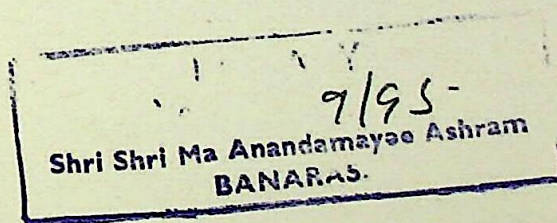
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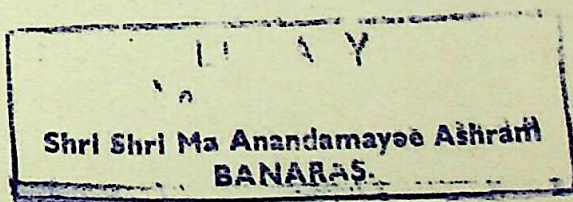
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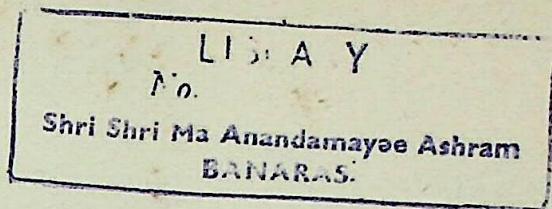




BOOK FOUR

The Book of Birth and Quest





CANTO ONE

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF THE FLAME

A MAENAD of the cycles of desire
 Around a Light she must not dare to touch,
 Hastening towards a far-off unknown goal
 Earth followed the endless journey of the Sun.
 A mind but half-awake in the swing of the void
 On the bosom of Inconscience dreamed out life
 And bore this finite world of thought and deed
 Across the immobile trance of the Infinite.
 A vast immutable silence with her ran:
 Prisoner of speed upon a jewelled wheel,
 She communed with the mystic heart in Space.
 Amid the ambiguous stillness of the stars
 She moved towards some undisclosed event
 And her rhythm measured the long whirl of Time.
 In ceaseless motion round the purple rim
 Day after day sped by like coloured spokes,
 And through a glamour of shifting hues of air
 The seasons drew in linked significant dance
 The symbol pageant of the changing year.
 Across the burning langour of the soil
 Paced Summer with his pomp of violent noons
 And stamped his tyranny of torrid light
 And the blue seal of a great burnished sky.
 Next through its fiery swoon or clotted knot
 Rain-tide burst in upon torn wings of heat,
 Startled with lightnings air's unquiet drowse,
 Lashed with life-giving streams the torpid soil,
 Overcast with flare and sound and storm-winged dark
 The star-defended doors of heaven's dim sleep,
 Or from the gold eye of her paramour

SAVITRI

Covered with packed cloud-veils the earth's brown face.
 Armies of revolution crossed the time-field,
 The clouds' unending march besieged the world,
 Tempests' pronunciamientos claimed the sky
 And thunder drums announced the embattled gods.
 A traveller from unquiet neighbouring seas
 The dense maned monsoon rode neighing through earth's hours:
 Thick now the emissary javelins:
 Enormous lightnings split the horizon's rim
 And, hurled from the quarters as from contending camps,
 Married heaven's edges steep and bare and blind:
 A surge and hiss and onset of huge rain,
 The long straight sleet-drift, clamours of winged storm-charge,
 Throngs of wind-faces, rushing of wind-feet
 Hurrying swept through the prone afflicted plains:
 Heaven's waters trailed and dribbled through the drowned land.
 Then all was a swift stride, a sibilant race,
 Or all was tempest's shout and water's fall.
 A dimness sagged on the grey floor of day,
 Its dingy sprawling length joined morn to eve,
 Wallowing in sludge and shower it reached black dark.
 Day a half darkness wore as its dull dress.
 Light looked into dawn's tarnished glass and met
 Its own face there, twin to a half-lit night's:
 Downpour and drip and seeping mist swayed all
 And turned dry soil to bog and reeking mud:
 Earth was a quagmire, heaven a dismal block.
 None saw through dank drenched wicks the dungeon sun.
 Even when no turmoil vexed air's sombre rest,
 Or a faint ray glimmered through weeping clouds
 As a sad smile gleams veiled by returning tears,
 All promised brightness failed at once denied
 Or, soon condemned, died like a brief-lived hope.
 Then a last massive deluge thrashed dead mire
 And a subsiding mutter left all still,
 Or only the muddy creep of sinking floods
 Or only a whisper and green toss of trees.
 Earth's mood now changed; she lay in lulled repose,
 The hours went by with slow contented tread:
 A wide and tranquil air remembered peace,

BOOK IV CANTO I

Earth was the comrade of a happy sun.
 A calmness neared as of the approach of God,
 A light of musing trance lit soil and sky.
 And an identity and ecstasy
 Filled meditation's solitary heart.
 A dream loitered in the dumb mind of Space,
 Time opened its chambers of felicity,
 An exaltation entered and a hope:
 An inmost self looked up to a heavenlier height,
 An inmost thought kindled a hidden flame
 And the inner sight adored an unseen sun.
 Three thoughtful seasons passed with shining tread
 And scanning one by one the pregnant hours
 Watched for a flame that lurked in luminous depths,
 The vigil of some mighty birth to come.
 Autumn led in the glory of her moons
 And dreamed in the splendour of her lotus pools
 And Winter and Dew-time laid their calm cool hands
 On Nature's bosom still in a half sleep
 And deepened with hues of lax and mellow ease
 The tranquil beauty of the waning year.
 Then Spring, an ardent lover, leaped through leaves
 And caught the earth-bride in his eager clasp;
 His advent was a fire of irised hues,
 His arms were a circle of the arrival of joy.
 His voice was a call to the Transcendent's sphere
 Whose secret touch upon our mortal lives
 Keeps ever new the thrill that made the world,
 Remoulds an ancient sweetness to new shapes
 And guards intact unchanged by death and Time
 The answer of our hearts to Nature's charm
 And keeps for ever new, yet still the same,
 The throb that ever wakes to the old delight
 And beauty and rapture and the joy to live.
 His coming brought the magic and the spell,
 At his touch life's tired heart grew glad and young;
 He made joy a willing prisoner in her breast.
 His grasp was a young god's upon earth's limbs:
 Changed by the passion of his divine outbreak
 He made her body beautiful with his kiss.

SAVITRI

Impatient for felicity he came,
 High-fluting with the coil's happy voice,
 His peacock turban trailing on the trees;
 His breath was a warm summons to delight,
 The dense voluptuous azure was his gaze.
 A soft celestial urge surprised the blood
 Rich with the instinct of God's sensuous joys;
 Revealed in beauty, a cadence was abroad
 Insistent on the rapture-thrill in life:
 Immortal movements touched the fleeting hours.
 A godlike packed intensity of sense
 Made it a passionate pleasure even to breathe;
 All sights and voices wove a single charm.
 The life of the enchanted globe became
 A storm of sweetness and of light and song,
 A revel of colour and of ecstasy,
 A hymn of rays, a litany of cries:
 A strain of choral priestly music sang
 And, swung on the swaying censer of the trees,
 A sacrifice of perfume filled the hours.
 Asocas burned in crimson spots of flame,
 Pure like the breath of an unstained desire.
 White jasmines haunted the enamoured air,
 Pale mango-blossoms fed the liquid voice
 Of the love-maddened coil, and the brown bee
 Muttered in fragrance mid the honey-buds.
 The sunlight was a great god's golden smile.
 All Nature was at beauty's festival.

In this high signal moment of the gods
 Answering earth's yearning and her cry for bliss
 A greatness from our other countries came.
 A silence in the noise of earthly things
 Immutably revealed the secret Word,
 A mightier influx filled the oblivious clay:
 A lamp was lit, a sacred image made.
 A mediating ray had touched the earth
 Bridging the gulf between man's mind and God's;
 Translating heaven into a human shape
 Its brightness linked our transience to the Unknown.

BOOK IV CANTO I

A spirit of its celestial source aware
 Descended into earth's imperfect mould
 And wept not fallen to mortality,
 But looked on all with large and tranquil eyes.
 One had returned from the transcendent planes
 And bore anew the load of mortal breath,
 Who had striven of old with our darkness and our pain;
 She took again her divine unfinished task:
 Survivor of death and the aeonic years,
 Once more with her fathomless heart she fronted Time.
 Again there was renewed, again revealed
 The ancient closeness by earth-vision veiled,
 The secret contact broken off in Time,
 A consanguinity of earth and heaven,
 Between the human portion toiling here
 And an as yet unborn and limitless Force.
 Again the mystic deep attempt began,
 The daring wager of the cosmic game.
 For since upon this blind and whirling globe
 Earth-plasm first quivered with the illumining mind
 And life invaded the material sheath
 Afflicting Inconscience with the need to feel,
 Since in Infinity's silence woke a word,
 A Mother wisdom works in Nature's breast
 To pour delight on the heart of toil and want
 And press perfection on life's stumbling powers,
 Impose heaven-sentience on the obscure abyss
 And make dumb Matter conscious of its God.
 Although our fallen minds forget to climb,
 Although our human stuff resists or breaks,
 She keeps her will that hopes to divinise clay;
 Failure cannot repress, defeat o'erthrow;
 Time cannot weary her nor the Void subdue,
 The ages have not made her passion less;
 No victory she admits of Death or Fate.
 Always she drives the souls to new attempt;
 Always her magical infinitude
 Forces to aspire the inert brute elements;
 As one who has all infinity to waste,
 She scatters the seed of the Eternal's strength

SAVITRI

On a half-animate and crumbling mould,
 Plants heaven's delight in the heart's passionate mire,
 Pours godhead's seekings into a bare beast frame,
 Hides immortality in a mask of death.
 Once more that Will put on an earthly shape.
 A Mind empowered from Truth's immutable seat
 Was framed for vision and interpreting act
 And instruments were sovereignly designed
 To express divinity in terrestrial signs.
 Outlined by the pressure of this new descent
 A lovelier body formed than earth had known.
 As yet a prophecy only and a hint,
 The glowing arc of a charmed unseen whole,
 It came into the sky of mortal life
 Bright like the crescent horn of a gold moon
 Returning in a faint illumined eve.
 At first glimmering like an unshaped idea
 Passive she lay sheltered in wordless sleep,
 Involved and drowned in Matter's giant trance,
 An infant heart of the deep-caved world-plan
 In cradle of divine inconscience rocked
 By the universal ecstasy of the suns.
 Some missioned Power in the half-wakened frame
 Nursed a transcendent birth's dumb glorious seed
 For which this vivid tenement was made.
 But soon the link of soul with form grew sure;
 Flooded was the dim cave with slow conscient light,
 The seed grew into a delicate marvellous bud,
 The bud disclosed a great and heavenly bloom.
 At once she seemed to found a mightier race.
 Arrived upon the strange and dubious globe
 The child remembering inly a far home
 Lived guarded in her spirit's luminous cell,
 Alone mid men in her diviner kind.
 Even in her childish movements could be felt
 The nearness of a light still kept from earth,
 Feelings that only eternity could share,
 Thoughts natural and native to the gods.
 As needing nothing but its own rapt flight
 Her nature dwelt in a strong separate air

BOOK IV CANTO I

Like a strange bird with large rich-coloured breast
 That sojourns on a secret fruited bough
 Lost in the emerald glory of the woods
 Or flies above divine unreachable tops.
 Harmoniously she impressed the earth with heaven.
 Aligned to a swift rhythm of sheer delight
 And singing to themselves her days went by;
 Each minute was a throb of beauty's heart,
 The hours were tuned to a sweet-toned content
 Which asked for nothing, but took all life gave
 Sovereignly as her nature's inborn right.
 Near was her spirit to its parent Sun,
 The Breath within to the eternal joy.
 The first fair life that breaks from Nature's swoon,
 Mounts in a line of rapture to the skies;
 Absorbed in its own happy urge it lives,
 Sufficient to itself, yet turned to all.
 It has no seen communion with its world,
 No open converse with surrounding things.
 There is a oneness native and occult
 That needs no instruments and erects no form;
 In unison it grows with all that is,
 All contacts it assumes into its trance,
 Laugh-tossed consents to the wind's kiss and takes
 Transmutingly the shocks of sun and breeze:
 A blissful yearning riots in its leaves,
 A magic passion trembles in its blooms,
 Its boughs aspire in hushed felicity.
 An occult godhead of this beauty is cause,
 The spirit and intimate guest of all this charm,
 This sweetness's priestess and this reverie's muse.
 Invisibly protected from our sense
 The Dryad lives drenched in a deeper ray
 And feels another air of storms and calms
 And quivers inwardly with mystic rain.
 This at a heavenlier height was shown in her.
 Even when she bent to meet earth's intimacies
 Her spirit kept the stature of the gods;
 It stooped but was not lost in Matter's reign.
 A world translated was her gleaming mind,

SAVITRI

And marvel-mooned bright crowding fantasies
 Fed with spiritual sustenance of dreams
 The ideal goddess in her house of gold.
 Aware of forms to which our eyes are closed,
 Conscious of nearnesses we cannot feel,
 The Power within her shaped her moulding sense
 In deeper figures than our surface types.
 An invisible sunlight ran within her veins
 And flooded her brain with heavenly brilliancies
 That woke a wider sight than earth could know.
 Outlined in the sincerity of that ray
 Her springing childlike thoughts were richly turned
 Into luminous patterns of her soul's deep truth,
 And from her eyes she cast another look
 On all around her than man's ignorant view.
 All objects were to her shapes of living selves
 And she perceived a message from her kin
 In each awakening touch of outward things.
 Each was a symbol power, a vivid flash
 In the circuit of infinities half-known;
 Nothing was alien or inanimate,
 Nothing without its meaning or its call.
 For with a greater Nature she was one.
 As from the soil sprang glory of branch and flower,
 As from the animal's life rose thinking man,
 A new epiphany appeared in her.
 A mind of light, a life of rhythmic force,
 A body instinct with hidden divinity
 Prepared an image of the coming god;
 And when the slow rhyme of the expanding years
 And the rich murmurous swarm-work of the days
 Had honey-packed her sense and filled her limbs,
 Accomplishing the moon-orb of her grace,
 Self-guarded in the silence of her strength
 Her solitary greatness was not less.
 Nearer the godhead to the surface pressed,
 A sun replacing childhood's nebula
 Sovereign in a blue and lonely sky.
 Upward it rose to grasp the human scene:
 The strong Inhabitant turned to watch her field,

BOOK IV CANTO I

A lovelier light assumed her spirit brow
 And sweet and solemn grew her musing gaze;
 Celestial-human deep warm slumbrous fires
 Woke in the long fringed glory of her eyes
 Like altar-burnings in a mystiered shrine.
 Out of those crystal windows gleamed a will
 That brought a large significance to life.
 Holding her forehead's candid stainless space
 Behind the student arch a noble power
 Of wisdom looked from light on transient things.
 A scout of victory in a vigil tower,
 Her aspiration called high destiny down;
 A silent warrior paced in her city of strength
 Inviolate, guarding Truth's diamond throne.
 A nectarous haloed moon her passionate heart
 Loved all and spoke no word and made no sign,
 But kept her bosom's rapturous secrecy
 A blissful ardent moved and voiceless world.
 Proud, swift and joyful ran the wave of life
 Within her like a stream in Paradise.
 Many high gods dwelt in one beautiful home;
 Yet was her nature's orb a perfect whole,
 Harmonious like a chant with many tones,
 Immense and various like a universe.
 The body that held this greatness seemed almost
 An image made of heaven's transparent light.
 Its charm recalled things seen in vision's hours,
 A golden bridge spanning a faery flood,
 A moon-touched palm tree single by a lake
 Companion of the wide and glimmering peace,
 A murmur as of leaves in Paradise
 Moving when feet of the Immortals pass,
 A fiery halo over sleeping hills,
 A strange and starry head alone in Night.

CANTO TWO

THE GROWTH OF THE FLAME

A LAND of mountains and wide sun-beat plains
 And giant rivers pacing to vast seas,
 A field of creation and spiritual hush,
 Silence swallowing life's acts into the deeps,
 Of thought's transcendent climb and heavenward leap,
 A brooding world of reverie and trance,
 Filled with the mightiest works of God and man,
 Where Nature seemed a dream of the Divine
 And beauty and grace and grandeur had their home,
 Harboured the childhood of the incarnate Flame.
 Over her watched millennial influences
 And the deep godheads of a grandiose past
 Looked on her and saw the future's godheads come
 As if this magnet drew their powers unseen.
 Earth's brooding wisdom spoke to her still breast;
 Mounting from mind's last peaks to mate with gods,
 Making earth's brilliant thoughts a springing board
 To dive into the cosmic vastnesses,
 The knowledge of the thinker and the seer
 Saw the unseen and thought the unthinkable,
 Opened the enormous doors of the unknown,
 Rent Man's horizons into infinity.
 A shoreless sweep was lent to the mortal's acts,
 And art and beauty sprang from the human depths;
 Nature and soul vied in nobility.
 Ethics the human keyed to imitate heaven;
 The harmony of a rich culture's tones
 Refined the sense and magnified its reach
 To hear the unheard and glimpse the invisible
 And taught the soul to soar beyond things known

BOOK IV CANTO II

Inspiring life to greaten and break its bounds
 Aspiring to the Immortals' unseen world.
 Leaving earth's safety daring wings of Mind
 Bore her above the trodden fields of thought
 Crossing the mystic seas of the Beyond
 To live on eagle heights near to the Sun.
 There wisdom sits on her eternal throne.
 All her life's turns led her to symbol doors
 Admitting to secret Powers that were her kin;
 Adept of truth, initiate of bliss,
 A mystic acolyte trained in Nature's school,
 Aware of the marvel of created things
 She laid the secrecies of her heart's deep muse
 Upon the altar of the Wonderful;
 Her hours were ritual in a timeless fane;
 Her acts became gestures of sacrifice.
 Invested with a rhythm of higher spheres
 The word was used as a hieratic means
 For the release of the imprisoned spirit
 Into communion with its comrade gods.
 Or it helped to beat out new expressive forms
 Of that which labours in the heart of life,
 Some immemorial Soul in men and things,
 Seeker of the Unknown and the Unborn
 Carrying a light from the Ineffable
 To rend the veil of the last mysteries.
 Intense philosophies pointed earth to heaven
 Or on foundations broad as cosmic Space
 Upraised the earth-mind to superhuman heights.
 Overpassing lines that please the outward eyes
 But hide the sight of that which lives within
 Sculpture and painting concentrated sense
 Upon an inner vision's motionless verge,
 Revealed a figure of the invisible,
 Unveiled all Nature's meaning in a form,
 Or caught into a body the Divine.
 The architecture of the Infinite
 Discovered here its inward-musing shapes
 Captured into wide breadths of soaring stone:
 Music brought down celestial yearnings, song

SAVITRI

Held the merged heart absorbed in rapturous depths,
 Linking the human with the cosmic cry;
 The world-interpreting movements of the dance
 Moulded idea and mood to a rhythmic sway
 And posture; crafts minute in subtle lines
 Eternised a swift moment's memory
 Or showed in a carving's sweep, a cup's design
 The underlying patterns of the unseen:
 Poems in largeness cast like moving worlds
 And metres surging with the ocean's voice
 Translated by grandeurs locked in Nature's heart
 But thrown now into a crowded glory of speech
 The beauty and sublimity of her forms,
 The passion of her moments and her moods
 Lifting the human word near to the god's.
 Man's eyes could look into the inner realms;
 His scrutiny discovered number's law
 And organised the motions of the stars,
 Mapped out the visible fashioning of the world,
 Questioned the process of his thoughts or made
 A theorised diagram of mind and life.
 These things she took in as her nature's food,
 But these alone could fill not her wide Self:
 A human seeking limited by its gains,
 To her they seemed the great and early steps
 Hazardous of a young discovering spirit
 Which saw not yet by its own native light;
 It tapped the universe with testing knocks
 Or stretched to find Truth-mind's divining rod;
 A growing out there was to numberless sides,
 But not the widest seeing of the soul,
 Not yet the vast direct immediate touch,
 Nor yet the art and wisdom of the Gods.
 A boundless knowledge greater than man's thought,
 A happiness too high for heart and sense
 Locked in the world and yearning for release
 She felt in her; waiting as yet for form,
 It asked for objects around which to grow
 And natures strong to bear without recoil
 The splendour of her native royalty,

BOOK IV CANTO II

Her greatness and her sweetness and her bliss,
 Her might to possess and her vast power to love:
 Earth made a stepping-stone to conquer heaven,
 The soul saw beyond heaven's limiting boundaries,
 Met a great light from the Unknowable
 And dreamed of a transcendent action's sphere.
 Aware of the universal Self in all
 She turned to living hearts and human forms;
 Her soul's reflections, complements, counterparts,
 The close outlying portions of her being
 Divided from her by walls of body and mind
 Yet to her spirit bound by ties divine.

• • • Overcoming invisible hedge and masked defence
 And the loneliness that separates soul from soul,
 She wished to make all one immense embrace
 That she might house in it all living things
 Raised into a splendid point of seeing light
 Out of division's dense inconscient cleft,
 And make them one with God and world and her.
 Only a few responded to her call:
 Still fewer felt the screened divinity
 And strove to mate its godhead with their own,
 Approaching with some kinship to her heights.
 Uplifted towards luminous secrecies
 Or conscious of some splendour hidden above
 They leaped to find her in a moment's flash,
 Glimpsing a light in a celestial vast,
 But could not keep the vision and the power
 And fell back to life's dull ordinary tone.
 A mind daring heavenly experiment,
 Growing towards some largeness they felt near,
 Testing the unknown's bound with eager touch
 They still were prisoned by their human grain:
 They could not keep up with her tireless step;
 Too small and eager for her large-paced will,
 Too narrow to look with the unborn Infinite's gaze
 Their nature weary grew of things too great.
 For even the close partners of her thoughts
 Who could have walked the nearest to her ray,
 Worshipped the power and light they felt in her

SAVITRI

But could not match the measure of her soul.
 A friend and yet too great wholly to know,
 She walked in their front towards a greater light,
 Their leader and queen over their hearts and souls,
 One close to their bosoms, yet divine and far.
 Admiring and amazed they saw her stride
 Attempting with a godlike rush and leap
 Heights for their human stature too remote
 Or with a slow great many-sided toil
 Pushing towards aims they hardly could conceive;
 Yet forced to be the satellites of her sun
 They moved unable to forego her light,
 Desiring they clutched at her with outstretched hands
 Or followed stumbling in the paths she made.
 Or longing with their self of life and flesh
 They clung to her for heart's nourishment and support:
 The rest they could not see in visible light;
 Vaguely they bore her inner mightiness.
 Or bound by the senses and the longing heart,
 Adoring with a turbid human love,
 They could not grasp the mighty spirit she was
 Or change by closeness to be even as she.
 Some felt her with their souls and thrilled with her;
 A greatness felt near yet beyond mind's grasp;
 To see her was a summons to adore,
 To be near her drew a high communion's force.
 So men worship a god too great to know,
 Too high, too vast to wear a limiting shape;
 They feel a Presence and obey a might,
 Adore a love whose rapture invades their breasts;
 To a divine ardour quickening the heart-beats,
 A law they follow greatening heart and life.
 Opened to a breath is the new diviner air,
 Opened to man is a freer, happier world:
 He sees high steps climbing to Self and Light.
 Her divine parts the soul's allegiance called:
 It saw, it felt; it knew the deity.
 Her will was puissant on their nature's acts,
 Her heart's inexhaustible sweetness lured their hearts,
 A being they loved whose bounds exceeded theirs;

BOOK IV CANTO II

Her measure they could not reach but bore her touch,
 Answering with the flower's answer to the sun
 They gave themselves to her and asked no more.
 One greater than themselves, too wide for their ken,
 Their minds could not understand nor wholly know,
 Their lives replied to hers, moved at her words:
 They felt a godhead and obeyed a call,
 Answered to her lead and did her work in the world;
 Their lives, their natures moved compelled by hers
 As if the truth of their own larger selves
 Put on an aspect of divinity
 To exalt them to a pitch beyond their earth's.
 They felt a larger future meet their walk;
 She held their hands, she chose for them their paths:
 They were moved by her towards great unknown things,
 Faith drew them and the joy to feel themselves hers;
 They lived in her, they saw the world with her eyes.
 Some turned to her against their nature's bent;
 Divided between wonder and revolt,
 Drawn by her charm and mastered by her will,
 Possessed by her, her striving to possess,
 Impatient subjects, their tied longing hearts
 Hugging the bonds close of which they most complained,
 Murmured at a yoke they would have wept to lose,
 The splendid yoke of her beauty and her love:
 Others pursued her with life's blind desires
 And claiming all of her as their lonely own,
 Hastened to engross her sweetness meant for all.
 As earth claims light for its lone separate need,
 Demanding her for their sole jealous clasp
 They asked from her movements bounded like their own
 And to their smallness craved a like response.
 Or they repined that she surpassed their grip,
 And hoped to bind her close with longing's cords.
 Or finding her touch desired too strong to bear
 They blamed her for a tyranny they loved,
 Shrank into themselves as from too bright a sun,
 Yet hankered for the splendour they refused.
 Angrily enamoured of her sweet passionate ray
 The weakness of their earth could hardly bear,

SAVITRI

They longed but cried out at the touch desired
 Inapt to meet divinity so close,
 Intolerant of a Force they could not house.
 Some drawn unwillingly by her divine sway
 Endured it like a sweet but alien spell,
 Unable to mount to levels too sublime
 They yearned to draw her down to their own earth.
 Or forced to centre round her their passionate lives
 They hoped to bind to their heart's human needs
 Her glory and grace that had enslaved their souls.

But mid this world, these hearts that answered her call,
 None could stand up her equal and her mate.
 In vain she stooped to equal them with her heights,
 Too pure that air was for small souls to breathe.
 These comrade selves to raise to her own wide breadths
 Her heart desired and fill with her own power
 That a diviner Force might enter life,
 A breath of Godhead greaten human time.
 Although she leaned down to their littleness
 Covering their lives with her strong passionate hands
 And knew by sympathy their needs and wants
 And dived in the shallow wave-depths of their lives
 And met and shared their heart-beats of grief and joy
 And bent to heal their sorrow and their pride,
 Lavishing the might that was hers on her lone peak
 To lift to it their aspiration's cry
 And though she drew their souls into her vast
 And surrounded with the silence of her deeps
 And held as the great Mother holds her own,
 Only her earthly surface bore their charge
 And mixed its fire with their mortality:
 Her greater self lived sole, unclaimed, within.
 Oftener in dumb Nature's stir and peace
 A nearness she could feel serenely one;
 The Force in her drew earth's subhuman broods;
 And to her spirit's large and free delight
 She joined the ardent-hued magnificent lives
 Of animal and bird and flower and tree.
 They answered to her with the simple heart.

BOOK IV CANTO II

In man a dim disturbing somewhat lives;
 It knows but turns away from divine Light
 Preferring the dark ignorance of the fall.
 Among the many who came drawn to her
 Nowhere she found her partner of high tasks,
 The comrade of her soul, her other self
 Who was made with her, like God and Nature, one.
 Some near approached, were touched, caught fire, then failed.
 Too great was her demand, too pure her force.
 Thus lighting earth around her like a sun,
 Yet in her inmost sky an orb aloof,
 A distance severed her from those most close.
 Puissant, apart her soul as the gods live.

As yet with the great world she had no link;
 In a small circle of young eager hearts,
 Her spirit's early reign and human school,
 Her apprenticeship she made to life and death,
 Content in her little garden of the gods
 As blossoms a flower in an unvisited place.
 Earth nursed, unconscious still, the inhabiting flame,
 Yet something deeply stirred and dimly knew;
 There was a movement and a passionate call,
 A rainbow dream, a hope of golden change;
 Some secret wing of expectation beat,
 A growing sense of something new and rare
 And beautiful stole across the heart of Time.
 Then a faint whisper of her touched the soil,
 Breathed like a hidden need the soul divines;
 The eye of the great world discovered her,
 A wonder lifted up its bardic voice.
 A key to a Light still kept in being's care,
 The sun-word of an ancient mystery's sense,
 Her name ran murmuring on the lips of men
 Exalted and sweet like an inspired verse
 Struck from the epic lyre of rumour's winds
 Or sung like a chanted thought by the poet Fame.
 But like a sacred symbol's was that cult.
 Admired, unsought, intangible to the grasp
 Her beauty and flaming strength were seen afar

SAVITRI

Like lightning playing with the fallen day,
 A glory unapproachably divine.
 There came to join her heart no heart's approach,
 No transient earthly love assailed her calm,
 No hero passion had the strength to seize;
 No eyes demanded her replying eyes.
 A Power within her awed the imperfect flesh;
 The self-protecting genius in our clay
 Divined the goddess in the woman's shape
 And drew back from a touch beyond its kind,
 The earth-nature bound in the sense-life's narrow make.
 The hearts of men are amorous of clay-kin
 And bear not spirits lone and high who bring
 Fire-intimations from the deathless planes
 Too vast for souls not born to mate with heaven.
 Whoever is too great must lonely live,
 Adored he walks in mighty solitude;
 Vain is his labour to create his kins,
 His only comrade is the Strength within.
 Thus was it for a while with Savitri,
 All worshipped marvellingly, none dared to claim.
 Her mind sat high pouring its golden beams,
 Her heart was a crowded temple of delight.
 A single lamp lit in perfection's house,
 A bright pure image in a priestless shrine,
 Alone amid surrounding crowds she dwelt,
 Apart in herself until her hour of fate.

CANTO THREE

THE CALL TO THE QUEST

A MORN that seemed a new creation's front,
 Bringing a greater sunlight, happier skies,
 Came, burdened with a beauty moved and strange
 Out of the changeless origin of things.
 An ancient longing struck again new roots.
 The air drank deep of unfulfilled desire;
 The high trees trembled with a wandering wind
 Like souls that quiver at the approach of joy,
 And in a bosom of green secrecy
 For ever of its one love-note untired
 A lyric coil cried among the leaves.
 Away from the terrestrial murmur turned
 Where transient calls and answers mix their flood,
 King Aswapathy listened through the ray
 To other sounds than meet the sense-formed ear.
 On a subtle interspace which rings our life
 Unlocked were the inner spirit's trance-closed doors:
 The inaudible strain in Nature could be caught;
 Across this cyclic tramp of eager lives,
 Across the deep urgency of present cares,
 Earth's wordless hymn to the Ineffable
 Arose from the ardent heart of the cosmic Void;
 He heard the voice repressed of unborn Powers
 Murmuring behind the luminous bars of Time.
 Again the mighty yearning raised its flame
 That asks a perfect life on earth for men
 And prays for certainty in the uncertain mind
 And shadowless bliss for suffering human hearts
 And Truth embodied in an ignorant world
 And godhead divinising mortal forms.

SAVITRI

A word that leaped from some far sky of thought,
 Admitted by the cowed receiving scribe
 Traversed the echoing passages of his brain
 And left its stamp on the recording cells.
 "O Force-compelled, Fate-driven earth-born race,
 O petty adventurers in an infinite world
 And prisoners of a dwarf humanity,
 How long will you tread the circling tracks of mind
 Around your little self and petty things?
 But not for a changeless littleness were you meant,
 Not for vain repetition were you built;
 Out of the Immortal's substance you were made;
 Your actions can be swift revealing steps,
 Your life a changeful mould for growing gods.
 A Seer, a strong Creator, is within,
 The immaculate Grandeur broods upon your days,
 Almighty powers are shut in Nature's cells.
 A greater destiny waits you in your front:
 This transient earthly being if he wills
 Can fit his acts to a transcendent scheme.
 He who now stares at the world with ignorant eyes
 Hardly from the Inconscient's night aroused
 That look at images and not at Truth
 Can fill those orbs with an immortal's sight.
 Yet shall the godhead grow within your hearts,
 You shall awake into the spirit's air
 And feel the breaking walls of mortal mind
 And hear the message which left life's heart dumb
 And look through Nature with sun-gazing lids
 And blow your conch-shells at the Eternal's gate.
 Authors of earth's high change, to you it is given
 To cross the dangerous spaces of the soul
 And touch the mighty Mother stark awake
 And meet the Omnipotent in this house of flesh
 And make of life the million-bodied One.
 The earth you tread is a border screened from heaven,
 The life you lead conceals the light you are.
 Immortal Powers sweep flaming past your doors;
 Far-off upon your tops the god-chant sounds
 While to exceed yourselves thought's trumpets call,

BOOK IV CANTO III

Heard by a few, but fewer dare aspire,
 The nympholepts of the ecstasy and the blaze.
 An epic of hope and failure breaks earth's heart;
 Her force and will exceed her form and fate.
 A goddess in a net of inconstancy caught,
 Self-bound in the pastures of death she dreams of life,
 Self-racked with the pains of hell aspires to joy,
 And builds to hope her altars of despair,
 Knows that one high step might enfranchise all
 And, suffering, looks for greatness in her sons.
 But dim in human hearts the ascending fire,
 The invisible Grandeur sits unworshipped there;
 Man sees the Highest in a limiting form
 Or looks upon a Person, hears a Name.
 He turns for little gains to ignorant Powers
 Or kindles his altar lights to a demon face.
 He loves the Ignorance fathering his pain.
 A spell is laid upon his glorious strengths.
 He has lost the inner Voice that led his thoughts,
 And masking the oracular tripod seat
 A specious Idol fills the marvel shrine.
 The great Illusion wraps him in its veils,
 The soul's deep intimations come in vain,
 In vain is the unending line of seers,
 The sages ponder in unsubstantial light,
 The poets lend their voice to outward dreams,
 A homeless fire inspires the prophet tongues.
 Heaven's flaming lights descend and back return,
 The luminous Eye approaches and retires;
 Eternity speaks, none understands its word;
 Fate is unwilling and the Abyss denies;
 The Inconscient's mindless waters block all done.
 Only a little lifted is Mind's screen.
 The Wise who know see but one half of Truth,
 The strong climb hardly to a low-peaked height,
 The hearts that yearn are given one hour to love,
 His tale half-told, falters the secret Bard;
 The gods are still too few in mortal forms."
 The Voice withdrew into its hidden skies.
 But like a shining answer from the gods

SAVITRI

Approached through sun-bright spaces Savitri.
 Advancing amid tall heaven-pillaring trees,
 Apparelled in her flickering-coloured robe,
 She seemed burning towards the eternal realms
 A bright moved torch of incense and of flame
 That from the sky-roofed temple-soil of earth
 A pilgrim hand lifts in an invisible shrine.
 There came the gift of a revealing hour:
 He saw through depths that reinterpret all,
 Limited not now by the dull body's eyes,
 New-found through an arch of clear discovery,
 This intimation of the world's delight,
 This wonder of the divine Artist's make
 Carved like a nectar-cup for thirsty gods,
 This breathing Scripture of the Eternal's joy,
 This net of sweetness woven of aureate fire.
 Transformed the delicate image-face became
 A deeper Nature's self-revealing sign,
 A gold-leaf palimpsest of sacred births,
 A grave world-symbol chiselled out of life.
 Her brow, a copy of clear unstained heavens,
 Was meditation's pedestal and defence,
 The very room and smile of musing Space,
 Its brooding line infinity's symbol curve.
 Amid her tresses' cloudy multitude
 The long eyes shadowed as by wings of Night
 Under that moon-gold forehead's dreaming breadth
 Were seas of love and thought that held the world;
 Marvelling at life and earth they saw truths far.
 A deathless meaning filled her mortal limbs;
 As in a golden vase's poignant line
 They seemed to carry the rhythmic sob of bliss
 Of earth's mute adoration towards heaven
 Released in beauty's cry of living form
 Towards the perfection of eternal things.
 Transparent grown the ephemeral living dress
 Bared the expressive deity to his view.
 Escaped from surface sight and mortal sense
 The seizing harmony of its shapes became
 The strange significant icon of a Power

BOOK IV CANTO III

Renewing its inscrutable descent
 Into a human figure of its works
 That stood out in life's bold abrupt relief
 On the soil of the evolving universe,
 A godhead sculptured on a wall of thought,
 Mirrored in the flowing hours and dimly shrined
 In Matter as in a cathedral cave.
 Annulled were the transient values of the mind,
 The body's sense renounced its earthly look,
 Immortal met immortal in their gaze.
 Awaked from the close spell of daily use
 That hides soul-truth with the outward form's disguise,
 He saw through the familiar cherished limbs
 The great and unknown spirit born his child.
 An impromptu from the deeper sight within,
 Thoughts rose in him that knew not their own scope.
 Then to those large and brooding depths whence Love
 Regarded him across the straits of mind,
 He spoke in sentences from the unseen Heights.
 A casual passing phrase can change our life.
 For the hidden prompters of our speech sometimes
 Can use the formulas of a moment's mood
 To weigh unconscious lips with words from Fate.
 "O Spirit, traveller of eternity,
 Who camest from the immortal spaces here
 Armed for the splendid hazard of thy life
 To set thy conquering foot on Chance and Time,
 The moon shut in her halo dreams like thee.
 A mighty Presence still defends thy frame.
 Perhaps the heavens guard thee for some great soul,
 Thy fate, thy work are kept somewhere afar,
 Thy spirit came not down a star alone.
 O living inscription of the beauty of love
 Missalled in aureate virginity,
 What message of heavenly strength and bliss in thee
 Is written with the Eternal's sun-white script,
 One shall discover and greaten with it his life
 To whom thou loosenest thy heart's jewelled strings.
 O rubies of silence, lips from which there stole
 Low laughter, music of tranquillity,

SAVITRI

Star-lustrous eyes awake in sweet large night
 And limbs like fine-linked poems made of gold
 Stanzaed to glimmering curves by artist gods,
 Depart where love and destiny call your charm.
 Venture through the deep world to find thy mate.
 For somewhere on the longing breast of earth,
 Thy unknown lover waits for thee the unknown.
 Thy soul has strength and needs no other guide
 Than One who burns within thy bosom's powers.
 There shall draw near to meet thy approaching steps
 The second self for whom thy nature asks,
 He who shall walk until thy body's end
 A close-bound traveller pacing with thy pace,
 The lyrist of thy soul's most intimate chords
 Who shall give voice to what in thee is mute.
 Then shall you grow like vibrant kindred harps,
 One in the beats of difference and delight,
 Responsive in divine and equal strains,
 Discovering new notes of the eternal theme.
 One force shall be your mover and your guide,
 One light shall be around you and within;
 Hand in strong hand confront Heaven's question, life:
 Challenge the ordeal of the immense disguise.
 Ascend from Nature to divinity's heights;
 Face the high gods, crowned with felicity,
 Then meet a greater God, thy self beyond Time."
 This word was seed of all the thing to be.
 A hand from some Greatness opened her heart's locked doors
 And showed the work for which her strength was born.
 As when the mantra sinks in Yoga's ear,
 Its message enters stirring the blind brain
 And keeps in the dim ignorant cells its sound;
 The hearer understands a form of words
 And, musing on the index thought it holds,
 He strives to read it with the labouring mind,
 But finds bright hints, not the embodied truth:
 Then, falling silent in himself to know
 He meets the deeper listening of his soul:
 The Word repeats itself in rhythmic strains:
 Thought, vision, feeling, sense, the body's self

BOOK IV CANTO III

Are seized unalterably and he endures
 An ecstasy and an immortal change;
 He feels a Wideness and becomes a Power,
 All knowledge rushes on him like a sea:
 Transmuted by the white spiritual ray
 He walks in naked heavens of joy and calm,
 Sees the God-face and hears transcendent speech:
 An equal greatness in her life was sown.
 Accustomed scenes were now an ended play.
 Moving in muse amid familiar powers,
 Touched by new magnitudes and faery signs,
 She turned to vastnesses not yet her own;
 Allured her heart throbbed to unknown sweetnesses,
 The secrets of an unseen world were close.
 The morn went up into a smiling sky;
 Cast from its sapphire pinnacle of trance
 Day sank into the burning gold of eve;
 The moon floated, a luminous waif through heaven
 And sank below the oblivious edge of dream;
 Night lit the watch fires of eternity.
 Then all went back into mind's secret caves;
 A darkness stooping on the heaven-bird's wings
 Sealed in her senses from external sight
 And opened the stupendous depths of sleep.
 When the pale dawn slipped through Night's shadowy guard,
 Vainly the new-born light desired her face;
 The palace woke to its own emptiness;
 The sovereign of its daily joys was far;
 Her moonbeam feet tinged not the lucent floors:
 The beauty and divinity were gone.
 Delight had fled to search the spacious world.

CANTO FOUR

THE QUEST

THE world-ways opened before Savitri.
 At first a strangeness of new brilliant scenes
 Peopled her mind and kept her body's gaze.
 But as she moved across the changing earth
 A deeper consciousness welled up in her:
 A citizen of many scenes and climes,
 Each soil and country it has made its home;
 It took all clans and peoples for her own,
 Till the whole destiny of mankind was hers.
 These unfamiliar spaces on her way
 Were known and neighbours to a sense within;
 Landscapes recurred like lost forgotten fields,
 Cities and rivers and plains her vision claimed
 Like slow-recurring memories in front,
 The stars at night were her past's brilliant friends,
 The winds murmured to her of ancient things
 And she met nameless comrades loved by her once.
 All was a part of old forgotten selves.
 Vaguely or with a flash of sudden hints
 Her acts recalled a line of bygone power,
 Even her motion's purpose was not new:
 Traveller to a prefigured high event,
 She seemed to her remembering witness soul
 To trace again a journey often made.
 A guidance turned the dumb revolving wheels
 And in the eager body of their speed
 The dim-masked hooded godheads rode who move.
 Assigned to man immutably from his birth,
 Receivers of the inner and outer law,
 At once the agents of his spirit's will

BOOK IV CANTO IV

And witnesses and executors of his fate.
 Inexorably faithful to their task,
 They hold his nature's sequence in their guard
 Carrying the unbroken thread old lives have spun.
 Attendants on his destiny's measured walk
 Leading to joys he has won and pains he has called,
 Even in his casual steps they intervene.
 Nothing we think or do is void or vain;
 Each is an energy loosed and holds its course.
 The shadowy keepers of our deathless past
 Have made our fate the child of our own acts,
 And from the furrows laboured by our will
 We reap the fruit of our forgotten deeds.
 But since unseen the tree that bore this fruit
 And we live in a present born from an unknown past,
 They seem but parts of a mechanic Force,
 To a mechanic mind tied by earth's laws;
 Yet are they instruments of a Will supreme,
 Watched by a still all-seeing Eye above.
 A prescient architect of Fate and Chance
 Who builds our lives on a foreseen design
 The meaning knows and consequence of each step
 And watches the inferior stumbling powers.
 Upon her silent heights she was aware
 Of a calm Presence throned above her brows
 Who saw the goal and chose each fateful curve;
 It used the body for its pedestal,
 The eyes that wandered were its searchlight fires,
 The hands that held the reins its living tools;
 All was the working of an ancient plan,
 A way prepared by an unerring Guide.
 Across wide noons and glowing afternoons,
 She met with Nature and with human forms
 And listened to the voices of the world;
 Driven from within she followed her long road,
 Mute in the luminous cavern of her heart,
 Like a bright cloud through the resplendent day.
 At first her path ran far through peopled tracts:
 Admitted to the lion eye of States
 And theatres of the loud act of man,

SAVITRI

Her carven chariot with its fretted wheels
 Threaded through clamorous marts and sentinel towers
 Past figured gates and high dream-sculptured fronts
 And gardens hung in the sapphire of the skies,
 Pillared assembly halls with armoured guards,
 Small fanes where one calm Image watched man's life
 And temples hewn as if by exiled gods
 To imitate their lost eternity.
 Often from gilded dusk to argent dawn
 Where jewel-lamps flickered on frescoed walls
 And the stone lattice stared at moonlit boughs,
 Half-conscious of the tardy listening night
 Dimly she glided between banks of sleep
 At rest in the slumbering palaces of kings.
 Hamlet and village saw the fate-van pass,
 Homes of a life bent to the soil it ploughs
 For sustenance of its short and passing days
 That, transient, keep their old repeated course
 Unchanging in the circle of a sky
 Which alters not above our mortal toil.
 Away from this thinking creature's burdened hours
 To free and griefless spaces now she turned
 Not yet perturbed by human joys and fears.
 Here was the childhood of primeval earth,
 Here timeless musings large and glad and still,
 Men had forborne as yet to fill with cares,
 Imperial acres of the eternal sower
 And wind-stirred grass-lands winking in the sun:
 Or mid green musing of woods and rough-browed hills,
 In the grove's murmurous bee-air humming wild
 Or past the long lapsing voice of silver floods
 Like a swift hope journeying among its dreams
 Hastened the chariot of the golden bride.
 Out of the world's immense unhuman past
 Tract-memories and ageless remnants came,
 Domains of light enfeoffed to an antique calm
 Listened to the unaccustomed sound of hooves
 And large immune entangled silences
 Absorbed her into emerald secrecy
 And slow hushed wizard nets of faery bloom

BOOK IV CANTO IV

Environed with their coloured snare her wheels.
 The strong importunate feet of Time fell soft
 Along these lonely ways, his titan pace
 Forgotten and his stark and ruinous rounds.
 The inner ear that listens to solitude,
 Leaning self-rapt unboundedly could hear
 The rhythm of the intenser wordless Thought
 That gathers in the silence behind life,
 And the low sweet inarticulate voice of earth
 In the great passion of her sun-kissed trance
 Ascended with its yearning undertone.
 Afar from the brute noise of clamorous needs
 The quieted all-seeking mind could feel,
 At rest from its blind outwardness of will,
 The unwearied clasp of her mute patient love
 And know for a soul the mother of our forms.
 This spirit stumbling in the fields of sense,
 This creature bruised in the mortar of the days
 Could find in her broad spaces of release.
 Not yet was a world all occupied by care.
 The bosom of our mother kept for us still
 Her austere regions and her musing depths,
 Her impersonal reaches lonely and inspired
 And the mightinesses of her rapture haunts.
 Muse-lipped she nursed her symbol mysteries
 And guarded for her pure-eyed sacraments
 The valley-clefts between her breasts of joy,
 Her mountain-altars for the fires of dawn
 And nuptial beaches where the ocean couched
 And the huge chanting of her prophet woods.
 Fields had she of her solitary mirth,
 Plains hushed and happy in the embrace of light,
 Alone with the cry of birds and hue of flowers
 And wildernesses of wonder lit by her moons
 And grey seer-evenings kindling with the stars
 And dim movement in the night's infinitude.
 August, exulting in her Maker's eye,
 She felt her nearness to him in earth's breast,
 Conversed still with a Light behind the veil,
 Still communed with Eternity beyond.

SAVITRI

A few and fit inhabitants she called
 To share the glad communion of her peace;
 The breadth, the summit were their natural home.
 The strong king-sages from their labour done,
 Freed from the warrior tension of their task,
 Came to her serene sessions in these wilds;
 The strife was over, the respite lay in front.
 Happy they lived with birds and beasts and flowers
 And sunlight and the rustle of the leaves,
 And heard the wild winds wandering in the night,
 Mused with the stars in their mute constant ranks,
 And lodged in the mornings as in azure tents,
 And with the glory of the noons were one.
 Some deeper plunged; from life's external clasp
 Beckoned into a fiery privacy
 In the soul's unassailed star-white recess
 They sojourned with an ever-living Bliss;
 A Voice profound in the ecstasy and the hush
 They heard, beheld an all-revealing Light.
 All time-made difference they overcame;
 The world was fibred with their own heart-strings;
 Close-drawn to the heart that beats in every breast,
 They reached the one self in all through boundless love.
 Attuned to Silence and to the world-rhyme,
 They loosened the knot of the imprisoning mind;
 Achieved was the wide untroubled witness gaze,
 Unsealed was Nature's great spiritual eye;
 To the height of heights rose now their daily climb:
 Truth leaned to them from her supernal realm;
 Above them blazed eternity's mystic suns.
 Nameless the austere ascetics without home
 Abandoning speech and motion and desire,
 Aloof from creatures sat absorbed, alone,
 Immaculate in tranquil heights of self
 On concentration's luminous voiceless peaks,
 World-naked hermits with their matted hair
 Immobile as the passionless great hills
 Around them grouped like thoughts of some vast mood
 Awaiting the Infinite's behest to end.
 The seers attuned to the universal Will,

BOOK IV CANTO IV

Content in Him who smiles behind earth's forms
 Abode ungrieved by the insistent days.
 About them like green trees girdling a hill
 Young grave disciples fashioned by their touch,
 Trained to the simple act and conscious word,
 Greatened within and grew to meet their heights.
 Far-wandering seekers on the Eternal's path
 Brought to these quiet founts their spirit's thirst
 And spent the treasure of a silent hour
 Bathed in the purity of the mild gaze
 That, unsistent, ruled them from its peace,
 And by its influence found the ways of calm.
 The Infants of the monarchy of the worlds,
 The heroic leaders of a coming time,
 King-children nurtured in that spacious air
 Like lions gambolling in sky and sun
 Received half-consciously their godlike stamp:
 Formed in the type of the high thoughts they sang
 They learned the wide magnificence of mood
 That makes us comrades of the cosmic urge,
 No longer chained to their small separate selves,
 Plastic and firm beneath the eternal hand,
 Met Nature with a bold and friendly clasp
 And served in her the Power that shapes her works.
 One-souled to all and free from narrowing bonds,
 Large like a continent of warm sunshine
 In wide equality's impartial joy,
 These sages breathed for God's delight in things.
 Assisting the slow entries of the gods,
 Sowing in young minds immortal thoughts they lived,
 Taught the great Truth to which man's race must rise
 Or opened the gates of freedom to a few,
 Imparting to our struggling world the Light
 They breathed like spirits from Time's dull yoke released,
 Comrades and vessels of the cosmic Force,
 Using a natural mastery like the sun's:
 Their speech, their silence was a help to earth.
 A magic happiness flowed from their touch;
 Oneness was sovereign in that sylvan peace,
 The wild beast joined in friendship with its prey,

SAVITRI

Persuading the hatred and the strife to cease
 The love that flows from the one Mother's breast
 Healed with their hearts the hard and wounded world.
 Others escaped from the confines of thought
 To where Mind motionless sleeps waiting Light's birth,
 And came back quivering with a nameless Force
 Drunk with a wine of lightning in their cells;
 Intuitive knowledge leaping into speech,
 Hearing the subtle voice that clothes the heavens,
 Carrying the splendour that has lit the suns,
 They sang Infinity's names and deathless powers
 In metres that reflect the moving worlds,
 Sight's sound-waves breaking from the soul's great deeps.
 Some lost to the person and his strip of thought
 In a motionless ocean of impersonal Power,
 Sat mighty, visioned with the Infinite's Light,
 Or, comrades of the everlasting Will,
 Surveyed the plan of past and future Time.
 Some winged like birds out of the cosmic sea
 And vanished into a bright and featureless Vast:
 Some silent watched the universal dance,
 Or helped the world by world-indifference.
 Some watched no more merged in a lonely Self,
 Absorbed in the trance from which no soul returns,
 All the occult world-lines for ever closed,
 The chains of birth and person cast away:
 Some uncompanied reached the Ineffable.

As floats a sunbeam through a shady place,
 The golden virgin in her carven car
 Came gliding among meditation's seats.
 Often in twilight mid returning troops
 Of cattle thickening with their dust the shades
 When the loud day had slipped below the verge,
 Arriving in a peaceful hermit grove
 She rested drawing round her like a cloak
 Its spirit of patient muse and potent prayer.
 Or near to a lion river's tawny mane
 And trees that worshipped on a praying shore,
 A domed and templed air's serene repose

BOOK IV CANTO IV

Beckoned to her hurrying wheels to stay their speed.
 In the solemnity of a space that seemed
 A mind remembering ancient silences,
 Where to the heart great bygone voices called
 And the large liberty of brooding seers
 Had left the long impress of their soul's scene
 Awake in candid dawn or darkness mooned,
 To the still touch inclined the daughter of Flame
 Drank in hushed splendour between tranquil lids
 And felt the kinship of eternal calm.
 But morn broke in reminding her of her quest
 And from low rustic couch or mat she rose
 And went impelled on her unfinished way
 And followed the fateful orbit of her life
 Like a desire that questions silent gods,
 Then passes starlike to some bright Beyond.
 Thence to great solitary tracts she came,
 Where man was a passer-by towards human scenes
 Or sole in Nature's vastness strove to live
 And called for help to ensouled invisible Powers,
 Overwhelmed by the immensity of his world
 And unaware of his own infinity.
 The Earth multiplied to her a changing brow
 And called her with a far and nameless voice.
 The mountains in their anchorite solitude,
 The forests with their multitudinous chant
 Disclosed to her the masked divinity's doors.
 On dreaming plains, an indolent expanse,
 The death-bed of a pale enchanted eve
 Under the glamour of a sunken sky,
 Impassive she lay as at an age's end,
 Or crossed an eager pack of huddled hills
 Lifting their heads to hunt a lairlike sky,
 Or travelled in a strange and empty land
 Where desolate summits camped in a weird heaven,
 Mute sentinels beneath a drifting moon,
 Or wandered in some lone tremendous wood
 Ringing for ever with the crickets' cry,
 Or followed a long glistening serpent road
 Through fields and pastures lapped in moveless light

SAVITRI

Or reached the wild beauty of a desert space
Where never plough was driven nor herd had grazed
And slumbered upon stripped and thirsty sands
Amid the savage wild-beast Night's appeal.
Still unaccomplished was the fateful quest;
Still she found not the one predestined face
For which she sought amid the sons of men.
A grandiose silence wrapped the regal day.
The months had fed the passion of the sun
And now his burning breath assailed the soil.
The tiger heats prowled through the fainting earth;
All was licked up as by a lolling tongue.
The spring winds failed; the sky was set like bronze.

END OF BOOK FOUR

BOOK FIVE

The Book of Love

CANTO ONE

THE DESTINED MEETING-PLACE

BUT now the destined spot and hour were close;
 Unknowing she had neared her nameless goal.
 For though a dress of blind and devious chance
 Is laid upon the work of all-wise Fate,
 Our acts interpret an omniscient Force
 That dwells in the compelling stuff of things,
 And nothing happens in the cosmic play
 But at its time and in its foreseen place.
 To a space she came of soft and delicate air
 That seemed a sanctuary of youth and joy,
 A highland world of free and green delight
 Where spring and summer lay together and strove
 In indolent and amicable debate,
 Inarmed, disputing with laughter who should rule.
 There expectation beat wide sudden wings,
 As if a soul had looked out from earth's face
 And all that was in her felt a coming change
 And forgetting obvious joys and common dreams,
 Obedient to Time's call and the spirit's fate,
 Were lifted to a beauty calm and pure
 That lived under the eyes of Eternity.
 A crowd of mountainous heads assailed the sky
 Pushing towards rival shoulders nearer heaven,
 The armoured leaders of an iron line;
 Earth prostrate lay beneath their feet of stone.
 Below there crouched a dream of emerald woods
 And gleaming borders solitary as sleep:
 Pale waters ran like glimmering threads of pearl.
 A sigh was straying among happy leaves;
 Cool-perfumed with slow pleasure-burdened feet

SAVITRĪ

Faint stumbling breezes faltered among flowers.
 The white crane stood, a vivid motionless streak,
 Peacock and parrot jewelled soil and tree,
 The dove's soft moan enriched the enamoured air
 And fire-winged wild-drakes swam in silvery pools.
 Earth couched alone with her great lover Heaven,
 Uncovered to her consort's purple eye.
 In her luxurious ecstasy of joy
 She squandered the love-music of her notes,
 Wasted the passionate pattern of her blooms
 And festival riot of her scents and hues.
 A cry and leap and hurry were around,
 The stealthy footfalls of her chasing things,
 The shaggy emerald of her centaur mane,
 The gold and sapphire of her warmth and blaze.
 Magician of her rapt felicities,
 Blithe, sensuous-hearted, careless and divine,
 Life ran or hid in her delightful rooms;
 Behind all brooded Nature's grandiose calm.
 Primeval peace was there and in its bosom
 Held undisturbed the strife of bird and beast.
 Man, the deep-browed artificer, had not come
 To lay his hand on happy inconscient things,
 Thought was not there nor the measurer, strong-eyed toil,
 Life had not learned its discord with its aim.
 The mighty Mother lay outstretched at ease.
 All was in line with her first satisfied plan;
 Moved by a universal will of joy
 The trees bloomed in their green felicity
 And the wild children brooded not on pain.
 At the end reclined a stern and giant tract
 Of tangled depths and solemn questioning hills
 And peaks like a bare austerity of the soul,
 Armoured, remote and desolately grand
 Like the thought-screened infinities that lie
 Behind the rapt smile of the Almighty's dance.
 A matted forest-head invaded heaven
 As if a blue-throated ascetic peered
 From the stone fastness of his mountain cell
 Regarding the brief gladness of the days;

BOOK V CANTO I

His vast extended spirit couched behind.
 A mighty murmur of immense retreat
 Besieged the ear, a sad and limitless call
 As of a soul retiring from the world.
 This was the scene which the ambiguous Mother
 Had chosen for her brief felicitous hour;
 Here in this solitude far from the world
 Her part she began in the world's joy and strife.
 Here were disclosed to her the mystic courts,
 The lurking doors of beauty and surprise,
 The wings that murmur in the golden house,
 The temple of sweetness and the fiery aisle.
 A stranger on the sorrowful roads of Time,
 Immortal under the yoke of death and fate,
 A sacrificant of the bliss and pain of the spheres,
 Love in the wilderness met Savitri.

CANTO TWO

SATYAVAN

ALL she remembered on this day of Fate,
 The road that hazarded not the solemn depths
 But turned away to flee to human homes,
 The wilderness with its mighty monotone,
 The morning like a lustrous seer above,
 The passion of the summits lost in heaven,
 The titan murmur of the endless woods.
 As if a wicket gate to joy were there
 Ringed in with voiceless hint and magic sign,
 Upon the margin of an unknown world
 Reclined the curve of a sun-held recess;
 Groves with strange flowers like eyes of gazing nymphs
 Peered from their secrecy into open space,
 Boughs whispering to a constancy of light
 Sheltered a dim and screened felicity,
 And slowly a supine inconstant breeze
 Ran like a fleeting sigh of happiness
 Over slumberous grasses pranked with green and gold.
 Hidden in the forest's bosom of loneliness
 Amid the leaves the inmate voices called,
 Sweet like desires enamoured and unseen,
 Cry answering to low insistent cry.
 Behind slept emerald dumb remotenesses,
 Haunt of a Nature passionate, veiled, denied
 To all but her own vision lost and wild.
 Earth in this beautiful refuge free from cares
 Murmured to the soul a song of strength and peace.
 Only one sign was there of a human tread:
 A single path, shot thin and arrowlike
 Into this bosom of vast and secret life,

BOOK V CANTO II

Pierced its enormous dream of solitude.
 Here first she met on the uncertain earth
 The one for whom her heart had come so far.
 As might a soul on Nature's background limned
 Stand out for a moment in a house of dream
 Created by the ardent breath of life,
 So he appeared against the forest verge
 Inset twixt green relief and golden ray.
 As if a weapon of the living Light,
 Erect and lofty like a spear of God
 His figure led the splendour of the morn.
 Noble and clear as the broad peaceful heavens
 A tablet of young wisdom was his brow,
 Freedom's imperious beauty curved his limbs,
 The joy of life was on his open face.
 His look was a wide daybreak of the gods,
 His head was a youthful Rishi's touched with light,
 His body was a lover's and a king's.
 In the magnificent dawning of his force
 Built like a moving statue of delight
 He illumined the border of the forest page.
 Out of the ignorant eager toil of the years
 Abandoning man's loud drama he had come
 Led by the wisdom of an adverse Fate
 To meet the ancient Mother in her groves.
 In her divine communion he had grown
 A foster-child of beauty and solitude,
 Heir to the centuries of the lonely wise,
 A brother of the sunshine and the sky,
 A wanderer communing with depth and marge.
 A Veda-knower of the unwritten book
 Perusing the mystic scripture of her forms
 He had caught her hierophant significances,
 Her sphered immense imaginations learned,
 Taught by sublimities of stream and wood
 And voices of the sun and star and flame
 And chant of the magic singers on the boughs
 And the dumb teaching of four-footed things.
 Helping with confident steps her slow great hands
 He leaned to her influence like a flower to rain

SAVITRI

And, like the flower and tree a natural growth,
 Widened, with the touches of her shaping hours.
 The mastery free natures have was his
 And their assent to joy and spacious calm;
 One with the single Spirit inhabiting all,
 He laid experience at the Godhead's feet;
 His mind was open to her infinite mind,
 His acts were rhythmic with her primal force;
 He had subdued his mortal thought to hers.
 That day he had turned from his accustomed paths;
 For One who, knowing every moment's load,
 Can move in all our studied or careless steps,
 Had laid the spell of destiny on his feet
 And drawn him to the forest's flowering verge.
 At first her glance that took life's million shapes
 Impartially to people its treasure-house
 Along with sky and flower and hill and star,
 Dwelt rather on the bright harmonious scene.
 It saw the green gold of the slumbrous sward,
 The grasses quivering with the slow wind's tread,
 The branches haunted by the wild bird's call.
 Awake to Nature, vague as yet to life,
 The eager prisoner from the Infinite,
 The immortal wrestler in its mortal house,
 Its pride, power, passion of a striving God,
 It saw this image of veiled deity,
 This thinking master creature of the earth,
 This last result of the beauty of the stars,
 But only saw like fair and common forms
 The artist spirit needs not for its work
 And puts aside in memory's shadowy rooms.
 A look, a turn decides our ill-poised fate.
 Thus in the hour that most concerned her all,
 Wandering unwarned by the slow surface mind,
 The heedless scout beneath her tenting lids
 Admired indifferent beauty and cared not
 To wake her body's spirit to its king.
 So might she have passed by on chance ignorant roads
 Missing the call of Heaven, losing life's aim,
 But the god touched in time her conscious soul.

BOOK V CANTO II

Her vision settled, caught and all was changed.
 Her mind at first dwelt in ideal dreams,
 Those intimate transmuters of earth's signs
 That make known things a hint of unseen spheres,
 And saw in him the genius of the spot,
 A symbol figure standing mid earth's scenes,
 A king of life outlined in delicate air.
 Yet this was but a moment's reverie;
 For suddenly her heart looked out at him,
 The passionate seeing used thought cannot match,
 And knew one nearer than its own close strings.
 All in a moment was surprised and seized,
 All in inconscient ecstasy lain wrapped
 Or under imagination's coloured lids
 Held up in a large mirror-air of dream,
 Broke forth in flame to recreate the world,
 And in that flame to new things she was born.
 A mystic tumult from her depths arose;
 Hailed, smitten erect like one who dreamed at ease,
 Life ran to gaze from every gate of sense:
 Thoughts indistinct and glad in moon-mist heavens,
 Feelings as when a universe takes birth,
 Swept through the turmoil of her bosom's space
 Invaded by a swarm of golden gods:
 Arising to a hymn of wonder's priests
 Her soul flung wide its doors to this new sun.
 An alchemy worked, the transmutation came;
 The missioned face had wrought the Master's spell.
 In the nameless light of two approaching eyes
 A swift and fated turning of her days
 Appeared and stretched to the gleam of unknown worlds.
 Then trembling with the mystic shock her heart
 Moved in her breast and cried out like a bird
 Who hears his mate upon a neighbouring bough.
 Hooves trampling fast, wheels largely stumbling ceased;
 The chariot stood like an arrested wind.
 And Satyavan looked out from his soul's doors
 And felt the enchantment of her liquid voice
 Fill his youth's purple ambiance and endured
 The haunting miracle of a perfect face.

SAVITRI

Mastered by the honey of a strange flower-mouth,
 Drawn to soul-spaces opening round a brow,
 He turned to the vision like a sea to the moon
 And suffered a dream of beauty and of change,
 Discovered the aureole round a mortal's head,
 Adored a new divinity in things.
 His self-bound nature foundered as in fire;
 His life was taken into another's life.
 The splendid lonely idols of his brain
 Fell prostrate from their bright sufficiencies,
 As at the touch of a new infinite,
 To worship a godhead greater than their own.
 An unknown imperious force drew him to her.
 Marvelling he came across the golden sward:
 Gaze met close gaze and clung in sight's embrace.
 A visage was there, noble and great and calm,
 As if encircled by a halo of thought,
 A span, an arch of meditating light,
 As though some secret nimbus half was seen;
 Her inner vision still remembering knew
 A forehead that wore the crown of all her past,
 Two eyes her constant and eternal stars,
 Comrade and sovereign eyes that claimed her soul,
 Lids known through many lives, large frames of love.
 He met in her regard his future's gaze,
 A promise and a presence and a fire,
 Saw an embodiment of aeonic dreams,
 A mystery of the rapture for which all
 Yearns in this world of brief mortality
 Made in material shape his very own.
 This golden figure given to his grasp
 Hid in its breast the key of all his aims,
 A spell to bring the Immortal's bliss on earth,
 To mate with heaven's truth our mortal thought,
 To lift earth-hearts nearer the Eternal's sun.
 In these great spirits now incarnate here
 Love brought down power out of eternity
 To make of life his new undying base.
 His passion surged a wave from fathomless deeps;
 It leapt to earth from far forgotten heights,

BOOK V CANTO II

But kept its nature of infinity.
 On the dumb bosom of this oblivious globe
 Although as unknown beings we seem to meet,
 Our lives are not aliens nor as strangers join,
 Moved to each other by a causeless force.
 The soul can recognise its answering soul
 Across dividing Time and, on Life's roads
 Absorbed wrapped traveller, turning it recovers
 Familiar splendours in an unknown face
 And touched by the warning finger of swift love
 It thrills again to an immortal joy
 Wearing a mortal body for delight.
 There is a Power within that knows beyond
 Our knowings; we are greater than our thoughts,
 And sometimes earth unveils that vision here.
 To live, to love are signs of infinite things,
 Love is a glory from eternity's spheres.
 Abased, disfigured, mocked by baser might
 That steal his name and shape and ecstasy,
 He is still the Godhead by which all can change.
 A mystery wakes in our inconscient stuff,
 A bliss is born that can remake our life.
 Love dwells in us like an unopened flower
 Awaiting a rapid moment of the soul,
 Or he roams in his charmed sleep mid thoughts and things;
 The child-god is at play, he seeks himself
 In many hearts and minds and living forms:
 He lingers for a sign that he can know
 And, when it comes, wakes blindly to a voice,
 A look, a touch, the meaning of a face.
 His instrument the dim corporeal mind,
 Of celestial insight now forgetful grown,
 He seizes on some sign of outward charm
 To guide him mid the throng of Nature's hints,
 Reads heavenly truths into earth's semblances,
 Desires the image for the Godhead's sake,
 Divines the immortalities of form
 And takes the body for the sculptured soul.
 Love's adoration like a mystic seer
 Through vision looks at the invisible,

SAVITRI

In earth's alphabet finds a God-like sense;
 But the mind only thinks, "Behold the one
 For whom my life has waited long unfilled,
 Behold the sudden sovereign of my days."
 Heart feels for heart, limb cries for answering limb;
 All strives to enforce the unity all is.
 Too far from the Divine, Love seeks his truth
 And life is blind and the instruments deceive
 And Powers are there that labour to debase.
 Still can the vision come, the joy arrive.
 Rare is the cup fit for love's nectar wine,
 As rare the vessel that can hold God's birth;
 A soul made ready through a thousand years
 Is the living mould of a supreme Descent.
 These knew each other though in forms thus strange.
 Although to sight unknown, although life, mind
 Had altered to hold a new significance,
 These bodies summed the drift of numberless births
 And the spirit to the spirit was the same.
 Amazed by a joy for which they had waited long,
 The lovers met upon their different paths,
 Travellers across the limitless plains of Time
 Together drawn from fate-led journeyings
 In the self-closed solitude of their human past,
 To a swift rapturous dream of future joy
 And the unexpected present of these eyes.
 By the revealing greatness of a look,
 Form-smitten the spirit's memory woke in sense.
 The mist was torn that lay between two lives;
 Her heart unveiled and his to find her turned;
 Attracted as in heaven star by star,
 They wondered at each other and rejoiced
 And wove affinity in a silent gaze.
 A moment passed that was eternity's ray,
 An hour began, the matrix of new Time.

CANTO THREE

SATYAVAN AND SAVITRI

OUT of the voiceless mystery of the past
 In a present ignorant of forgotten bonds
 These spirits met upon the roads of Time.
 Yet in the heart their secret conscious selves
 At once aware grew of each other warned
 By the first call of a delightful voice
 And a first vision of the destined face.
 As when being cries to being from its depths
 Behind the screen of the external sense
 And strives to find the heart-disclosing word,
 The passionate speech revealing the soul's need,
 But the mind's ignorance veils the inner sight,
 Only a little breaks through our earth-made bounds,
 So now they met in that momentous hour,
 So utter the recognition in the deeps,
 The remembrance lost, the oneness felt and missed.
 Thus Satyavan spoke first to Savitri:
 "O thou who com'st to me out of Time's silences,
 Yet thy voice has wakened my heart to an unknown bliss,
 Immortal or mortal only in thy frame,
 For more than earth speaks to me from thy soul
 And more than earth surrounds me in thy gaze,
 How art thou named among the sons of men?
 Whence hast thou dawned filling my spirit's days,
 Brighter than summer, brighter than my flowers,
 Into the lonely borders of my life,
 O Sunlight moulded like a golden maid?
 I know that mighty gods are friends of earth.
 Amid the pageantries of day and dusk,
 Long have I travelled with my pilgrim soul

SAVITRI

Moved by the marvel of familiar things.
 Earth could not hide from me the powers she veils:
 Even though moving mid an earthly scene
 And the common surfaces of terrestrial things,
 My vision saw unblinded by her forms;
 The Godhead looked at me from familiar scenes.
 I witnessed the virgin bridals of the dawn
 Behind the glowing curtains of the sky
 Or vying in joy with the bright morning's steps
 I paced along the slumberous coasts of morn,
 Or the gold desert of the sunlight crossed
 Traversing great wastes of splendour and of fire,
 Or met the moon gliding amazed through heaven
 In the uncertain wideness of the night,
 Or the stars marched on their long sentinel routes
 Pointing their spears through the infinitudes,
 The day and dusk revealed to me hidden shapes;
 Figures have come to me from secret shores
 And happy faces looked from ray and flame.
 I have heard strange voices cross the ether's waves,
 The centaur's wizard song has thrilled my ear;
 I glimpsed the Apsaras bathing in the pools
 And saw the wood-nymphs peering through the leaves;
 The winds have shown to me their trampling lords,
 I have beheld the princes of the Sun
 Burning in thousand-pillared homes of light.
 So now my mind could dream and my heart fear
 That from some wonder-couch beyond our air
 Risen in a wide morning of the gods
 Thou drov'st thy horses from the Thunderer's worlds.
 Although to heaven thy beauty seems allied,
 Much rather would my thoughts rejoice to know
 That mortal sweetness smiles between thy lips
 And thy heart can beat beneath a human gaze
 And thy aureate bosom quiver with a look
 And its tumult answer to an earth-born voice.
 If our time-vexed affections thou canst feel,
 Earth's ease of simple things can satisfy,
 If thy glance can dwell content on earthly soil,
 And this celestial summary of delight,

BOOK V CANTO III

Thy golden body, dally with fatigue
 Oppressing with its grace our terrain, while
 The frail sweet passing taste of earthly food
 Delays thee and the torrent's leaping wine,
 Descend. Let thy journey cease, come down to us.
 Close is my father's creepered hermitage
 Screened by the tall ranks of these silent kings,
 Sung to by voices of the hue-robed choirs
 Whose chants repeat transcribed in music's notes
 The passionate coloured lettering of the boughs
 And fill the hours with their melodious cry.
 Amid the welcome-hum of many bees
 Invade our honied kingdom of the woods;
 There let me lead thee into an opulent life.
 Bare, simple is the sylvan hermit-life;
 Yet is it clad with the jewelry of earth.
 Wild winds run—visitors midst the swaying tops,
 Through the calm days heaven's sentinels of peace
 Couched on a purple robe of sky above
 Look down on a rich secrecy and hush
 And the chambered nuptial waters chant within.
 Enormous, whispering, many-formed around
 High forest gods have taken in their arms
 The human hour, a guest of their centuried pomps.
 Apparellled are the morns in gold and green,
 Sunlight and shadow tapestry the walls
 To make a resting chamber fit for thee."
 Awhile she paused as if hearing still his voice,
 Unwilling to break the charm, then slowly spoke.
 Musing she answered: "I am Savitri,
 Princess of Madra. Who art thou? What name
 Musical on earth expresses thee to men?
 What trunk of kings watered by fortunate streams
 Has flowered at last upon one happy branch?
 Why is thy dwelling in the pathless wood
 Far from the deeds thy glorious youth demands,
 Haunt of the anchorites and earth's wilder broods,
 Where only with thy witness self thou roam'st
 In Nature's green unhuman loneliness
 Surrounded by enormous silences

SAVITRI

And the blind murmur of primeval calms?"

And Satyavan replied to Savitri:

"In days when yet his sight looked clear on life,
King Dyumathsena once, the Shalwa, reigned
Through all the tract which from behind these tops
Passing its days of emerald delight
In trusting converse with the traveller winds
Turns, looking back towards the southern heavens
And leans its flank upon the musing hills.
But equal fate removed her covering hand,
A living night enclosed the strong man's paths,
Heaven's brilliant gods recalled their careless gifts,
Took from blank eyes their glad and helping ray
And led the uncertain goddess from his side.

Outcast from empire of the outer light,
Lost to the comradeship of seeing men,
He sojourns in two solitudes, within
And in the solemn rustle of the woods.
Son of that king, I, Satyavan, have lived
Contented, for not yet of thee aware,
In my high peopled loneliness of spirit
And this huge vital murmur kin to me,
Nursed by the vastness, pupil of solitude.
Great Nature came to her recovered child;
I reigned in a kingdom of a nobler kind
Than men can build upon dull Matter's soil;
I met the frankness of the primal earth,
I enjoyed the intimacy of infant God.
In the great tapestried chambers of her state
Free in her boundless palace I have dwelt
Indulged by the warm mother of us all,
Reared with my natural brothers in her house
I lay in the wide bare embrace of heaven,
The sunlight's radiant blessing clasped my brow,
The moonbeam's silver ecstasy at night
Kissed my dim lids to sleep. Earth's morns were mine;
Lured by faint murmurings with the green-robed hours
I wandered lost in woods, prone to the voice
Of winds and waters, partner of the sun's joy,
A listener to the universal speech:

BOOK V CANTO III

My spirit satisfied within me knew
 Godlike our birthright, luxuriated our life
 Whose close belongings are the earth and skies.
 Before fate led me into this emerald world,
 Aroused by some foreshadowing touch within,
 An early prescience in my mind approached
 The great dumb animal consciousness of earth
 Now grown so close to me who have left old pomps
 To live in this grandiose murmur dim and vast.
 As if to a deeper country of the soul
 Transposing the vivid imagery of earth,
 Through an inner seeing and sense a waking came.
 A visioned spell pursued my boyhood's hours,
 All things the eye had caught in coloured lines
 Were seen anew through the interpreting mind
 And in the shape it sought to seize the soul.
 An early child-god took my hand that held,
 Moved, guided by the seeking of his touch,
 Bright forms and hues which fled across his sight;
 Limned upon page and stone they spoke to men.
 High beauty's visitants my inmates were.
 The neighing pride of rapid life that roams
 Wind-maned through our pastures, on my seeing mood
 Cast shapes of swiftness; trooping spotted deer
 Against the vesper sky became a song
 Of evening to the silence of the soul.
 I caught for some eternal eye the sudden
 Kingfisher flashing to a darkling pool;
 A slow swan silvering the azure lake,
 A shape of magic whiteness, sailed through dream;
 Leaves trembling with the passion of the wind
 And wandering wings nearing from infinity
 Lived on the tablets of my inner sight;
 Mountains and trees stood there like thoughts from God.
 Pranked butterflies, the conscious flowers of air,
 The brilliant long bills in their vivid dress,
 The peacock scattering on the breeze his moons
 Painted my memory like a frescoed wall.
 I carved my vision out of wood and stone;
 I caught the echoes of a word supreme

SAVITRI

And metred the rhythm beats of infinity
 And listened through music for the eternal Voice.
 I felt a covert touch, I heard a call,
 But could not clasp the body of my God
 Or hold between my hands the World-Mother's feet.
 In men I met strange portions of a Self
 That sought for fragments and in fragments lived:
 Each lived in himself and for himself alone
 And with the rest joined only fleeting ties;
 Each passioned over his surface joy and grief,
 Nor saw the Eternal in his secret house.
 I conversed with Nature, mused with the changecless stars,
 God's watch-fires burning in the ignorant Night,
 And saw upon her mighty visage fall
 A ray prophetic of the Eternal's sun.
 I sat with the forest sages in their trance:
 There poured awaking streams of diamond light,
 I glimpsed the presence of the One in all.
 But still there lacked the last transcendent power
 And Matter still slept empty of its Lord.
 The spirit was saved, the body lost and mute
 Lived still with Death and ancient Ignorance;
 The Inconscient was its base, the Void its fate.
 But thou hast come and all will surely change:
 I shall feel the World-Mother in thy golden limbs
 And hear her wisdom in thy sacred voice.
 The child of the Void shall be reborn in God.
 My Matter shall evade the Inconscient's trance,
 My body like my spirit shall be free:
 It shall escape from Death and Ignorance."
 And Savitri musing still replied to him:
 "Speak more to me, speak more, O Satyavan,
 Speak of thyself and all thou art within;
 I would know thee as if we had ever lived
 Together in the chamber of our souls.
 Speak till a light shall come into my heart
 And my moved mortal mind shall understand
 What all the deathless being in me feels.
 It knows that thou art he my spirit has sought
 Amidst earth's thronging visages and forms

BOOK V CANTO III

Across the golden spaces of my life."
 And Satyavan like a replying harp
 To the insistent calling of a flute
 Answered her questioning and let stream to her
 His heart in many-coloured waves of speech:
 "O golden princess, perfect Savitri,
 More I would tell than failing words can speak
 Of all that thou hast meant to me, unknown,
 All that the lightning flash of love reveals.
 In one great hour of the unveiling gods
 Even a brief nearness has reshaped my life.
 For now I know that all I lived and was
 Moved towards this moment of my heart's rebirth;
 I look back on the meaning of myself,
 A soul made ready on earth's soil for thee.
 Once were my days like days of other men:
 To think and act was all, to enjoy and breathe;
 This was the width and height of mortal hope:
 Yet there came glimpses of a deeper self
 That lives behind life and makes her act its scene.
 A truth was felt that screened its shape from mind,
 A Greatness working towards a hidden end,
 And vaguely through the forms of earth there looked
 Something that life is not and yet must be.
 I groped for the Mystery with the lantern, Thought.
 Its glimmerings lighted with the abstract word
 A half-visible ground and travelling yard by yard
 It mapped a system of the Self and God.
 I could not live the truth it spoke and thought.
 I turned to seize its form in visible things,
 Hoping to fix its rule by mortal mind,
 Imposed a narrow structure of world-law
 Upon the freedom of the Infinite,
 A hard firm skeleton of outward Truth,
 A mental scheme of a mechanic Power.
 This light showed more the darknesses unsearched;
 It made the original secrecy more occult.
 It could not analyse its cosmic veil
 Or glimpse the Wonder-worker's hidden hand
 And trace the pattern of his magic plans.

SAVITRI

I plunged into an inner seeing⁷ Mind
 And knew the secret laws and sorceries
 That make of Matter mind's bewildered slave.
 The mystery was not solved but deepened more.
 I strove to find its hints through Beauty and Art,
 But Form cannot unveil the indwelling Power;
 Only it throws its symbols at our hearts.
 It evoked a mood of self, invoked a sign
 Of all the brooding glory hidden in sense:
 I lived in the ray but faced not to the Sun.
 I looked upon the world and missed the Self,
 And when I found the Self, I lost the world,
 My other selves I lost and the body of God,
 The link of the finite with the Infinite,
 The bridge between the appearance and the Truth,
 The mystic aim for which the world was made,
 The human sense of Immortality.
 But now the gold link comes to me with thy feet
 And His gold sun has shone on me from thy face.
 For now another realm draws near with thee
 And now diviner voices fill my ear,
 A strange new world swims to me in thy gaze
 Approaching like a star from unknown heavens;
 A cry of spheres comes with thee and a song
 Of flaming gods. I draw a wealthier breath
 And in a fierier march of moments move.
 My mind transfigures to a rapturous seer.
 A foam-leap travelling from the waves of bliss
 Has changed my heart and changed the earth around:
 All with thy coming fills. Air, soil and stream
 Wear bridal raiment to be fit for thee
 And sunlight grows a shadow of thy hue
 Because of change within me by thy look.
 Come nearer to me from thy car of light
 On this green sward disdaining not our soil.
 For here are secret spaces made for thee
 Whose caves of emerald long to screen thy form.
 Wilt thou not make this mortal bliss thy sphere?
 Descend, O Happiness, with thy moon-gold feet,
 Enrich earth's floors upon whose sleep we lie.

BOOK V CANTO III

O my bright beauty's princess, Savitri,
 By my delight and thy own joy compelled
 Enter my life, thy chamber and thy shrine.
 In the great quietness where spirits meet,
 Led by my hushed desire into my woods
 Let the dim rustling arches over thee lean;
 One with the breath of things eternal live,
 Thy heartbeats near to mine, till there shall leap
 Enchanted from the fragrance of the flowers
 A moment which all murmurs shall recall
 And every bird remember in its cry."

Allured to her lashes by his passionate words
 Her fathomless soul looked at him from her eyes;
 Passing her lips in liquid sounds it spoke.
 This word alone she uttered and said all:
 "O Satyavan, I have heard thee and I know;
 I know that thou and only thou art he."
 Then down she came from her high carven car
 Descending with a soft and faltering haste;
 Her many-hued raiment glistening in the light
 Hovered a moment over the wind-stirred grass,
 Mixed with a glimmer of her body's ray
 Like lovely plumage of a settling bird.
 Her gleaming feet upon the green gold sward
 Scattered a memory of wandering beams
 And lightly pressed the unspoken desire of earth
 Cherished in her too brief passing by the soil.
 Then flitting like pale brilliant moths her hands
 Took from the sylvan verge's sunlit arms
 A load of their jewel faces' clustering swarms,
 Companions of the spring-time and the breeze.
 A candid garland set with simple forms
 Her rapid fingers taught a flower song
 The stanzaed movement of a marriage hymn.
 Profound in perfume and immersed in hue
 They mixed their yearning's coloured signs and made
 The bloom of their purity and passion one.
 A sacrament of joy in treasuring palms
 She brought, flower-symbol of her offered life,

SAVITRI

Then with raised hands that trembled a little now
 At the very closeness that her soul desired,
 This bond of sweetness, their bright union's sign,
 She laid on the bosom coveted by her love.
 As if inclined before some gracious god
 Who has out of his mist of greatness shone
 To fill with beauty his adorer's hours,
 She bowed and touched his feet with worshipping hands;
 She made her life his world for him to tread
 And made her body the room of his delight,
 Her beating heart a remembrancer of bliss.
 He bent to her and took into his own
 Their married yearning joined like folded hopes;
 As if a whole rich world suddenly possessed,
 Wedded to all he had been became himself,
 An inexhaustible joy made his alone,
 He gathered all Savitri into his clasp.
 Around her his embrace became the sign
 Of a locked closeness through slow intimate years,
 A first sweet summary of delight to come,
 One brevity intense of all long life.
 In a wide moment of two souls that meet
 She felt her being flow into him as in waves
 A river pours into a mighty sea.
 As when a soul is merging into God
 To live in Him for ever and know His joy,
 Her consciousness was a wave of him alone
 And all her separate self was lost in his.
 As a starry heaven encircles happy earth,
 He shut her into himself in a circle of bliss
 And shut the world into himself and her.
 A boundless isolation made them one;
 He was aware of her enveloping him
 And let her penetrate his very soul,
 As is a world by the world's spirit filled,
 As the mortal wakes into Eternity,
 As the finite opens to the Infinite.
 Thus were they in each other lost awhile,
 Then drawing back from their long ecstasy's trance
 Came into a new self and a new world.

BOOK V CANTO III

Each now was a part of the other's unity.
 The world was but their twin self-finding's scene
 Or their own wedded being's vaster frame.
 On the high glowing cupola of the day
 Fate tied a knot with morning's halo threads
 While by the ministry of an auspice-hour
 Heart-bound before the sun, their marriage fire,
 The wedding of the eternal Lord and Spouse
 Took place again on earth in human forms:
 In a new act of the drama of the world
 The united Two began a greater age.
 In the silence and murmur of that emerald world
 And the mutter of the priest-wind's sacred verse,
 Amid the choral whisperings of the leaves
 Love's twain had joined together and grew one.
 The natural miracle was wrought once more:
 In the immutable ideal world
 One human moment was eternal made.

Then down the narrow path where their lives had met
 He led and showed to her her future world,
 Love's refuge and corner of happy solitude.
 At the path's end through a green cleft in the trees
 She saw a clustering line of hermit-routes
 And looked now first on her heart's future home,
 The thatch that covered the life of Satyavan.
 Adorned with creepers and red-climbing flowers
 It seemed a sylvan beauty in her dreams
 Slumbering with brown body and tumbled hair
 In her chamber inviolate of emerald peace.
 Around it stretched the forest's anchorite mood
 Lost in the depths of its own solitude.
 Then moved by the deep joy she could not speak,
 A little depth of it quivering in her words,
 Her happy voice cried out to Satyavan:
 "My heart will stay here on this forest verge
 And close to this thatched roof while I am far:
 Now of more wandering it has no need.
 But I must haste back to my father's house
 Which soon will lose one loved accustomed tread

SAVITRI

And listen in vain for a once cherished voice.
For soon I shall return nor ever again
Oneness must sever its recovered bliss
Or fate sunder our lives while life is ours.”
Once more she mounted on the carven car
And under the ardour of a fiery noon
Less bright than the splendour of her thoughts and dreams
She sped swift-reined, swift-hearted but still saw
In still lucidities of sight's inner world
Through the cool scented wood's luxurious gloom
On shadowy paths between great rugged trunks
Pace towards a tranquil clearing Satyavan.
A nave of trees enshrined the hermit thatch,
The new deep covert of her felicity,
Preferred to heaven her soul's temple and home.
This now remained with her, her heart's constant scene.

END OF BOOK FIVE

BOOK SIX

The Book of Fate

CANTO ONE

THE WORD OF FATE

IN silent bounds bordering the mortal's plane
 Crossing a wide expanse of brilliant peace
 Narad the heavenly sage from Paradise
 Came chanting through the large and lustrous air.
 Attracted by the golden summer-earth
 That lay beneath him like a glowing bowl
 Tilted upon a table of the Gods,
 Turning as if moved round by an unseen hand
 To catch the warmth and blaze of a small sun,
 He passed from the immortals' happy paths
 To a world of toil and quest and grief and hope,
 To these rooms of a see-saw game of death and life.
 Across an intangible border of soul-space
 He passed from Mind into material things
 Amid the inventions of the inconscient Self
 And the workings of a blind somnambulist Force.
 Below him circling burned the myriad suns:
 He bore the ripples of the etheric sea;
 A primal Air brought the first joy of touch;
 A secret Spirit drew its mighty breath.
 Contracting and expanding this huge world
 The secret might of the creative fire
 Displayed its triple power to build and form,
 Its infinitesimal wave-sparks' weaving dance,
 Its nebulous units' grounding shape and mass,
 Magic foundation and pattern of a world,
 Its radiance bursting into the light of stars;
 He felt a sap of life, a sap of death ;
 Into solid Matter's dense communion
 Plunging and its obscure oneness of forms

SAVITRI

He shared with a dumb Spirit identity.
 He beheld the cosmic Being at his task,
 His eyes measured the spaces, gauged the depths,
 His inner gaze the movements of the soul,
 He saw the eternal labour of the Gods,
 And looked upon the life of beasts and men.
 A change felt upon the singer's mood,
 A rapture and a pathos moved his voice;
 He sang no more of light that never wanes,
 And oneness and pure everlasting bliss,
 He sang no more the deathless heart of love,
 His chant was a hymn of Ignorance and Fate.
 He sang the name of Vishnu and the birth
 And joy and passion of the mystic world,
 And how the stars were made and life began
 And the mute regions stirred with the throb of a soul.
 He sang the Inconscient and its secret self,
 Its power omnipotent knowing not what it does,
 All shaping without will or thought or sense,
 Its blind unerring occult mystery,
 And darkness yearning towards the eternal Light,
 And Love that broods within the dim abyss
 And waits the answer of the human heart,
 And death that climbs immortality.
 He sang of the Truth that cries from Night's blind deeps,
 And the Mother Wisdom hid in Nature's breast
 And the Idea that through her dumbness works
 And the miracle of her transforming hands,
 Of life that slumbers in the stone and sun
 And mind subliminal in mindless life,
 And the consciousness that wakes in beasts and men.
 He sang of the glory and marvel still to be born,
 Of the Godhead throwing off at last its veil,
 Of bodies made divine and life made bliss,
 Immortal sweetness clasping immortal might,
 Heart sensing heart, thought looking straight at thought,
 And the delight when every barrier falls,
 And the transfiguration and the ecstasy.
 And as he sang the demons wept with joy
 Foreseeing the end of their long dreadful task

BOOK VI CANTO I

And the defeat for which they hoped in vain,
 And glad release from their self-chosen doom
 And return into the One from whom they came.
 He who has conquered the immortals' seats,
 Came down to men on earth the Man divine.
 As might a lightning streak, a glory fell
 Nearing until the rapt eyes of the sage
 Looked out from luminous cloud and, strangely limned
 His face, a beautiful mask of antique joy,
 Appearing in light descended where arose
 King Aswapathy's palace to the winds
 In Madra, flowering up in delicate stone.
 There welcomed him the sage and thoughtful king,
 At his side a creature beautiful, passionate, wise,
 Aspiring like a sacrificial flame,
 Skyward from its earth-seat through luminous air,
 Queen-browed, the human mother of Savitri.
 There for an hour untouched by the earth's siege
 They ceased from common life and care and sat
 Inclining to the high and rhythmic voice,
 While in his measured chant the heavenly seer
 Spoke of the toils of men and what the gods
 Strive for on earth, and joy that throbs behind
 The marvel and the mystery of pain.
 He sang to them of the lotus-heart of love
 With all its thousand luminous buds of truth,
 Which quivering sleeps veiled by apparent things.
 It trembles at each touch, it strives to wake
 And one day it shall hear a blissful voice
 And in the garden of the Spouse shall bloom
 When she is seized by her discovered lord.
 A mighty shuddering coil of ecstasy
 Crept through the deep heart of the universe.
 Out of her Matter's stupor, her mind's dreams,
 She woke, she looked upon God's unveiled face.
 Even as he sang and rapture stole through earth-time
 And caught the heavens, came with a call of hooves,
 As of her swift heart hastening, Savitri;
 Her radiant tread glimmered across the floor.
 A happy wonder in her fathomless gaze,

SAVITRI

Changed by the halo of her love she came;
 Her eyes rich with a shining mist of joy
 As one who comes from a heavenly embassy
 Discharging the proud mission of her heart,
 One carrying the sanction of the gods
 To her love and its luminous eternity
 She stood before her mighty father's throne
 And, eager for beauty on discovered earth
 Transformed and new in her heart's miracle-light,
 Saw like a rose of marvel, worshipping,
 The fiery sweetness of the son of Heaven.
 He flung on her his vast immortal look;
 His inner gaze surrounded her with its light
 And reining back knowledge from his immortal lips
 He cried to her, "Who is this that comes, the bride,
 The flame-born, and round her illumined head
 Pouring their lights her hymeneal pomps
 Move flashing about her? From what green glimmer of glades
 Retreating into dewy silences
 Or half-seen verge of waters moon-betrayed
 Bringst thou this glory of enchanted eyes?
 Earth has gold-hued expanses, shadowy hills
 That cowl their dreaming phantom heads in night,
 And guarded in a cloistral joy of woods,
 Screened banks sink down into felicity
 Seized by the curved incessant yearning hands
 And ripple-passion of the up-gazing stream:
 Amid cool-lipped murmurs of its pure embrace
 They lose their souls on beds of trembling reeds.
 And all these are mysterious presences
 In which some spirit's immortal bliss is felt,
 And they betray the earth-born heart to joy.
 There hast thou paused, and marvelling borne eyes
 Unknown, or heard a voice that forced thy life
 To strain its rapture through thy listening soul?
 Or, if my thought could trust this shimmering gaze,
 It would say: thou hast not drunk from an earthly cup;
 But stepping through azure curtains of the morn
 Thou wast surrounded on a magic verge
 In brighter countries than man's eyes can bear.

BOOK VI CANTO I

Assailed by trooping voices of delight
 And seized mid a sunlit glamour of the boughs
 In faery woods, led down the gleaming slopes
 Of Gundhamadan where the Apsaras roam,
 Thy limbs have shared the sports which none has seen,
 And in god-haunts thy human footsteps strayed,
 Thy mortal bosom quivered with god-speech
 And thy soul answered to a Word unknown.
 What feet of gods, what ravishing flutes of heaven
 Have thrilled high melodies round, from near and far
 Approaching through the soft and revelling air,
 Which still surprised thou hearest? They have fed
 Thy silence on some red strange-ecstasied fruit
 And thou hast trod the dim moon-peaks of bliss.
 Reveal, O winged with light, whence thou hast flown
 Hastening bright-hued through the green-tangled earth,
 Thy body rhythmical with the spring-bird's call.
 The empty roses of thy hands are filled
 Only with their own beauty and the thrill
 Of a remembered clasp, and in thee glows
 A heavenly jar, thy firm deep-honied heart,
 New-brimming with a sweet and nectarous wine.
 Thou hast not spoken with the kings of pain.
 Life's perilous music rings yet to thy ear
 Far-melodied, rapid, grand, a Centaur's song,
 Or soft as water plashing mid the hills,
 Or mighty as a great chant of many winds.
 Moon-bright thou livest in thy inner bliss.
 Thou comest like a silver deer through groves
 Of coral flowers and buds of glowing dreams,
 Or fleest like a wind-goddess through leaves,
 Or roamest, O ruby-eyed and snow-winged dove,
 Flitting through thickets of thy pure desires
 In the unwounded beauty of thy soul.
 These things are only images to thy earth,
 But truest truth of that which in thee sleeps.
 For such is thy spirit, a sister of the gods,
 Thy earthly body lovely to the eyes,
 And thou art kin in joy to heaven's sons.
 O thou who hast come to this great perilous world

SAVITRI

Now only seen through the splendour of thy dreams,
 Where hardly love and beauty can live safe,
 Thyself a being dangerously great,
 A soul alone in a golden house of thought
 Has lived walled in by the safety of thy dreams.
 On heights of happiness leaving doom asleep
 Who hunts unseen the unconscious lives of men,
 If thy heart could live locked in the ideal's gold,
 As high, as happy might thy waking be!
 If for all time doom could be left to sleep!"

He spoke but held his knowledge back from words.
 As a cloud plays with lightning's vivid laugh,
 But still holds back the thunder in its heart,
 Only he let bright images escape.
 His speech like glimmering music veiled his thoughts;
 Pitiful to mortals, only to them it spoke,
 As a wind flatters the bright summer air,
 Of living beauty and of present bliss:
 He hid in his all-knowing mind the rest.
 To those who hearkened to his celestial voice,
 The veil heaven's pity throws on future pain
 The Immortals' sanction seemed of endless joy.
 But Aswapathy answered to the seer;
 His listening mind had marked the dubious close,
 An ominous shadow felt behind the words,
 But calm like one who ever sits facing Fate
 Here mid the dangerous contours of earth's life,
 He answered covert thought with guarded speech:
 "O deathless sage who knowest all things here,
 If I could read by the ray of my own wish
 Through the carved shield of symbol images
 Which thou hast thrown before thy heavenly mind
 I might see the steps of a young godlike life
 Happily beginning luminous-eyed on earth;
 Between the Unknowable and the Unseen
 Born on the borders of two wonder-worlds,
 It flames out symbols of the Infinite
 And lives in a great light of inner suns.
 For it has read and broken the hidden seals,
 It has drunk of the Immortal's wells of joy,

BOOK VI CANTO I

It has looked across the jewel bars of heaven,
 It has entered the aspiring Secrecy,
 It sees beyond terrestrial common things
 And communes with the Powers that build the worlds,
 Till through the shining gates and mystic streets
 Of the city of lapis lazuli and pearl
 Proud deeds step forth a rank and march of gods.
 Although in pauses of our human lives
 Earth keeps for man some short and perfect hours
 When the unconscious tread of Time can seem
 The eternal moment which the deathless live,
 Yet rare that touch upon the mortal's world:
 Hardly a soul and body here are born
 In the fierce difficult movement of the stars,
 Whose life can keep the paradisaal note,
 Its rhythm repeat the many-toned melody
 Tirelessly throbbing through the rapturous air
 Caught in the song that sways the Apsara's limbs
 When she floats gleaming like a cloud of light,
 A wave of joy on heaven's moon-stone floor.
 Behold this image cast by light and love,
 A stanza of the ardour of the gods
 Perfectly rhymed, a pillared ripple of gold!
 Her body like a brimmed pitcher of delight
 Shaped in a splendour of gold-coloured bronze
 As if to seize earth's truth of hidden bliss.
 Dream-made illumined mirrors are her eyes
 Draped subtly in a slumberous fringe of jet,
 Retaining heaven's reflections in their depths.
 Even as her body, such is she within,
 Heaven's lustrous mornings gloriously recur,
 Like drops of fire upon a silver page,
 In her young spirit yet untouched with tears.
 All beautiful things eternal seem and new
 To virgin wonder in her crystal soul.
 The unchanging blue reveals its spacious thought;
 Marvellous the moon floats on through wondering skies;
 Earth's flowers spring up and laugh at time and death;
 The charmed mutations of the enchanter life
 Race like bright children past the smiling hours.

SAVITRI

If but this joy of life could last, nor pain
 Throw its bronze note into her rhythmed days!
 Behold her, singer with the prescient gaze,
 And let thy blessing chant that this fair child
 Shall pour the nectar of a sorrowless life
 Around her from her lucid heart of love,
 Heal with her bliss the tired breast of earth
 And cast like a happy snare felicity.
 As grows the great and golden bounteous tree
 Flowering by Alacananda's murmuring waves,
 Where with enamoured speed the waters run
 Lispering and babbling to the splendour of morn
 And cling with lyric laughter round the knees
 Of heaven's daughters dripping magic rain
 Pearl-bright from moon-gold limbs and cloudy hair,
 So are her dawns like jewelled leaves of light.
 So casts she her felicity on men.
 A flame of radiant happiness she was born,
 And surely will that flame set earth alight:
 Doom surely will see her pass and say no word,
 But too often here the careless Mother leaves
 Her chosen in the envious hands of Fate:
 The harp of God falls mute, its call to bliss
 Discouraged fails mid earth's unhappy sounds;
 The strings of the siren Ecstasy cry not here
 Or sooner silenced in the human heart.
 Of sorrow's songs we have enough: bid once
 Her glad and griefless days ring heaven here.
 Or must fire always test the great of soul?
 Along the dreadful causeway of the gods
 Armoured with love and faith and sacred joy,
 A traveller to the Eternal's house
 Once let unwounded pass a mortal life."
 But Narad answered not; silent he sat,
 Knowing that words are vain and Fate is lord.
 He looked into the unseen with seeing eyes,
 Then, dallying with the mortal's ignorance
 Like one who knows not, questioning, he cried:
 "On what high mission went her hastening wheels?
 Whence came she with this glory in her heart

BOOK VI CANTO I

And Paradise made visible in her eyes?
 What sudden God has met, what face supreme?"
 To whom the king, "The red asoca watched
 Her going forth which now sees her return.
 Arisen into an air of flaming dawn
 Like a bright bird tired of her lonely branch
 To find her own lord, since to her on earth
 He came not yet, this sweetness wandered forth
 Cleaving her way with the beat of her rapid wings.
 Led by a distant call her vague swift flight
 Threaded the summer morns and sunlit lands.
 The happy rest her burdened lashes keep
 And these charmed guardian lips hold treasured still.
 Virgin who comest perfected by joy,
 Reveal the name thy sudden heart-beats learned.
 Whom hast thou chosen kingliest among men?"
 And Savitri answered with her still calm voice
 As one who speaks beneath the eyes of Fate:
 "Father and king, I have carried out thy will,
 One whom I sought I found in distant lands;
 I have obeyed my heart, I have heard its call.
 On the borders of a dreaming wilderness
 Mid Shalwa's giant hills and brooding woods,
 In his thatched hermitage Dyumathsena dwells,
 Blind, exiled, outcast, once a mighty king.
 The son of Dyumathsena, Satyavan
 I have met on the wild forest's lonely verge.
 My father, I have chosen. This is done."
 Astonished, all sat silent for a space.
 Then Aswapathy looked within and saw
 A heavy shadow float above the name
 Chased by a sudden and stupendous light;
 He looked into his daughter's eyes and spoke:
 "Well hast thou done and I approve thy choice.
 If this is all, then all is surely well;
 If there is more, then all can still be well.
 Whether it seem good or evil to men's eyes,
 Only for good the secret Will can work.
 Our destiny is written in double terms:
 Through Nature's contraries we draw near God;

SAVITRI

Out of the darkness we still grow to light.
 Death is our road to immortality.
 'Cry woe, cry woe' the world's lost voices wail,
 Yet conquers the eternal Good at last."
 Then might the sage have spoken, but the king
 In haste broke out and stayed the dangerous word:
 "O singer of ultimate ecstasy,
 Lend not a dangerous vision to the blind,
 Because by native right thou hast seen clear.
 Impose not on the mortal's tremulous breast
 The dire ordeal that foreknowledge brings;
 Demand not now the godhead in our acts.
 Here are not happy peaks the heaven-nymphs roam,
 Or Coilas or Vaicountha's starry stair,
 Abrupt jagged hills only the mighty climb
 Are here where few dare even think to rise;
 Far voices call down from the dizzy rocks,
 Chill, slippery, precipitous are the paths.
 Too hard the gods are with man's fragile race
 In their large heavens they dwell exempt from Fate
 And they forget the wounded feet of man,
 His limbs that faint beneath the whips of grief,
 His heart that hears the tread of time and death,
 The future's road is hid from mortal sight:
 He moves towards a veiled and secret face.
 To light one step in front is all his hope
 And only for a little strength he asks
 To meet the riddle of his shrouded fate.
 Awaited by a vague and half-seen force,
 Aware of danger to his uncertain hours
 He guards his flickering yearnings from her breath;
 He feels not when the dreadful fingers close
 Around him with the grasp none can elude.
 If thou canst loose her grip then only speak,
 Perhaps from the iron snare there is escape:
 Our mind perhaps deceives us with its words
 And gives the name of doom to our own choice;
 Perhaps the blindness of our will is Fate."
 He said and Narad answered not the king.
 But now the queen alarmed lifted her voice:

BOOK VI CANTO I

"O seer, thy bright arrival has been timed
 To this high moment of a happy life.
 Then let the speech benign of griefless spheres
 Confirm this blithe conjunction of two stars
 And sanction joy with thy celestial voice.
 Here drag not in the peril of our thoughts,
 Let not our words create the doom they fear.
 Here is no cause for dread, no chance for grief
 To raise her ominous head and stare at love:
 A single spirit in a multitude,
 Happy is Satyavan mid earthly men
 Whom Savitri has chosen for her mate,
 And fortunate the forest hermitage
 Where leaving her palace and riches and a throne
 My Savitri will dwell and bring in heaven.
 Then let thy blessing put the immortals' seal
 On these bright lives' unstained felicity
 Pushing the ominous Shadow from their days.
 Too heavy falls a Shadow on man's heart;
 It dares not be too happy upon earth.
 It dreads the blow dogging too vivid joys,
 A lash unseen in Fate's extended hand,
 The danger lurking in fortune's proud extremes,
 An irony in life's indulgent smile
 And trembles at the laughter of the gods.
 Or if crouches unseen a panther doom,
 If wings of Evil brood above that house,
 Then also speak, that we may turn aside
 And rescue our lives from hazard of wayside doom
 And chance entanglement of an alien fate."
 And Narad slowly answered to the queen:
 "What help is in prevision to the driven?
 Safe doors cry opening near, the doomed pass on.
 A future knowledge is an added pain,
 A torturing burden and a fruitless light
 On the enormous scene that Fate has built.
 The eternal poet, universal Mind,
 Has paged each line of his imperial act;
 Invisible the giant actors tread
 And man lives like some secret player's mask.

SAVITRI

He knows not even what his lips shall speak.
 For a mysterious Power compels his steps
 And life is stronger than his trembling soul.
 None can refuse what the stark Force demands,
 Her eyes are fixed upon her mighty aim;
 No cry or prayer can turn her from her path,
 She has leaped an arrow from the bow of God."
 His words were theirs who live unforced to grieve
 And help by calm the swaying wheels of life
 And the long restlessness of transient things
 And the trouble and passion of the unquiet world.
 As though her own bosom were pierced the mother saw
 The ancient human sentence strike her child,
 Her sweetness that deserved another fate
 Only a larger measure given of tears.
 Aspiring to the nature of the gods,
 A mind proof-armoured mailed in mighty thoughts,
 A will entire couchant behind wisdom's shield,
 Though to still heavens of knowledge she had risen,
 Though calm and wise and Aswapathy's queen,
 Human was she still and opened her doors to grief;
 The stony-eyed injustice she accused
 Of the marble godhead of inflexible Law;
 Nor sought the strength extreme adversity brings
 To lives that stand erect and front the World-Power:
 Her heart appealed against the impartial judge,
 Taxed with perversity the impersonal One.
 Her tranquil spirit she called not to her aid,
 But as a common man beneath his load
 Grows faint and breathes his pain in ignorant words;
 So now she arraigned the World's impassive will:
 "What stealthy doom has crept across her path
 Emerging from the dark forest's sullen heart,
 What evil thing stood smiling by the way
 And wore the beauty of the Shalwa boy?
 Perhaps he came an enemy from her past
 Armed with a hidden force of ancient wrongs,
 Himself unknowing, and seized her unknown.
 Here dreadfully entangled love and hate
 Meet us blind wanderers mid the perils of Time.

BOOK VI CANTO I

Our days are links of a disastrous chain,
 Necessity avenges casual steps;
 Old cruelties come back unrecognised,
 The gods make use of our forgotten deeds.
 Yet all in vain the bitter law was made.
 Our own minds are the justicers of doom.
 For nothing have we learned, but still repeat
 Our stark misuse of self and others' selves,
 And fallen from his ethereal element
 Love darkens to the spirit of nether gods.
 The dreadful angel angry with his joys
 Woundingly sweet he cannot yet forego,
 Is pitiless to the soul his gaze disarmed,
 He visits with his own pangs his quivering prey
 Forcing us to cling enamoured to his grip
 As if in love with our own agony.
 This is one poignant misery in the world,
 And grief has other lassoes for our life.
 Our sympathies become our tortures.
 Strength have I my own punishment to bear,
 Knowing it just, but on this earth perplexed,
 Smitten in the sorrow of scourged and helpless things,
 Often it faints to meet other suffering eyes.
 We are not as the gods who know not grief
 And look impassive on a suffering world,
 Calm they gaze down on the little human scene
 And the short-lived passion crossing mortal hearts.
 An ancient tale of woe can move us still,
 We keep the ache of breasts that breathe no more,
 We are shaken by the sight of human pain,
 And share the miseries that others feel.
 Ours not the passionless lids that cannot age.
 Too hard for us is heaven's indifference:
 Our own tragedies are not enough for us,
 All pathos and all sufferings we make ours ;
 We have sorrow for a greatness passed away
 And feel the touch of tears in mortal things.
 Even a stranger's anguish rends my heart,
 And this, O Narad, is my well-loved child.
 Hide not from us our doom, if doom is ours.

SAVITRI

This is the worst, an unknown face of Fate,
 A terror ominous mute felt more than seen
 Behind our seat by day, our couch by night,
 A Fate lurking in the shadow of our hearts,
 The anguish of the unseen that waits to strike.
 To know is best, however hard to bear."
 Then cried the sage piercing the mother's heart,
 Forcing to steel the will of Savitri
 His words set free the spring of cosmic Fate.
 The great Gods use the pain of human hearts
 As a sharp axe to hew their cosmic road:
 They squander lavishly men's blood and tears
 For a moment's purpose in their fateful work.
 This cosmic Nature's balance is not ours
 Nor the mystic measure of her need and use.
 A single word lets loose vast agencies,
 A casual act determines the world's fate.
 So now he set free destiny in that hour:
 "The truth thou hast claimed; I give to thee the truth.
 A marvel of the meeting earth and heavens
 Is he whom Savitri has chosen mid men,
 His figure is the front of Nature's march,
 His single being excels the works of Time.
 A sapphire cutting from the sleep of heaven,
 Delightful is the soul of Satyavan,
 A ray out of the rapturous infinite,
 A silence waking to a hymn of joy.
 A divinity and kingliness gird his brow;
 His eyes keep a memory from a world of bliss.
 As brilliant as a lonely moon in heaven,
 Gentle like the sweet bud that spring desires,
 Pure like a stream that kisses silent banks,
 He takes with bright surprise spirit and sense.
 A living knot of golden Paradise,
 A blue Immense he leans to the longing world,
 Time's joy borrowed out of eternity,
 A star of splendour or a rose of bliss.
 In him Soul and Nature, equal Presences,
 Balance and fuse in a wide harmony.
 The Happy in their bright ether have not hearts

BOOK VI CANTO I

More sweet and true than this of mortal make
 That takes all joy as the world's native gift
 And to all gives joy as the world's natural right.
 His speech carries a light of inner truth,
 And a large-eyed communion with the Power
 In common things has made veiless his mind,
 A seer in earth-shapes of garbless deity.
 A tranquil breadth of sky windless and still
 Watching the world like a mind of unplumbed thought,
 A silent space musing and luminous
 Uncovered by the morning to delight,
 A green tangle of trees upon a happy hill
 Made into a murmuring nest by southern winds,
 These are his images and parallels,
 His kin in beauty and in depth his peers.
 A will to climb lifts a delight to live
 Heaven's height companion of earth-beauty's charm,
 An aspiration to the immortals' air
 Lain on the lap of mortal ecstasy.
 His sweetness and his joy attract all hearts
 To live with his own in a glad tenancy,
 His strength is like a tower built to reach heaven,
 A godhead quarried from the stones of life.
 O loss, if death into its elements
 Of which his gracious envelope was built
 Shatter this vase before it breathes its sweets,
 As if earth could not keep too long from heaven
 A treasure thus unique loaned by the gods,
 A being so rare, of so divine a make!
 In one brief year when this bright hour flies back
 And perches careless on a branch of Time,
 This sovereign glory ends heaven lent to earth,
 This splendour vanishes from the mortal's sky:
 Heaven's greatness came, but was too great to stay.
 Twelve swift-winged months are given to him and her;
 This day returning Satyavan must die."
 A lightning bright and nude the sentence fell.
 But the queen cried: "Vain then can be Heaven's grace!
 Heaven mocks us with the brilliance of its gifts,
 For Death is a cupbearer of the wine

SAVITRI

Of too brief joy held up to mortal lips
 For a passionate moment by the careless gods.
 But I reject the grace and the mockery.
 Mounting thy car go forth, O Savitri,
 And travel once more through the peopled lands.
 Alas, in the green gladness of the woods
 Thy heart has stooped to a misleading call.
 Choose once again and leave this fated head,
 Death is the gardener of this wonder-tree;
 Love's sweetness sleeps in his pale marble hand.
 Advancing in a honeyed line, but closed
 A little joy would buy too bitter an end.
 Plead not thy choice, for death has made it vain.
 Thy youth and radiance were not born to lie
 A casket void dropped on a careless soil;
 A choice less rare may call a happier fate."
 But Savitri answered from her violent heart,—
 Her voice was calm, her face was fixed like steel:
 "Once my heart chose and chooses not again.
 The word I have spoken can never be erased,
 It is written in the record book of God.
 The truth once uttered, from the earth's air effaced,
 By mind forgotten, sounds immortally
 For ever in the memory of Time.
 Once the dice fall thrown by the hand of Fate
 In an eternal moment of the gods.
 My heart has sealed its troth to Satyavan:
 Its signature adverse Fate cannot efface,
 Its seal not Fate nor Death nor Time dissolve.
 Those who shall part who have grown one being within?
 Death's grip can break our bodies, not our souls;
 If death take him, I too know how to die.
 Let Fate do with me what she will or can;
 I am stronger than death and greater than my fate;
 My love shall outlast the world, doom falls from me
 Helpless against my immortality.
 Fate's law may change, but not my spirit's will."
 An adamant will, she cast her speech like bronze,
 But in the queen's mind listening her words
 Rang like the voice of a self-chosen Doom

BOOK VI CANTO I

Denying every issue of escape.
 To her own despair answer the mother made;
 As one she cried who in her heavy heart
 Labours amid the sobbing of her hopes
 To wake a note of help from sadder strings;
 "O child, in the magnificence of thy soul
 Dwelling on the border of a greater world,
 And, dazzled by thy superhuman thoughts,
 Thou lendst eternity to a mortal hope.
 Here on this mutable and ignorant earth,
 Who is the lover and who is the friend?
 All passes here, nothing remains the same.
 None is for any on this transient globe.
 He whom thou lovest now, a stranger came
 And into a far strangeness shall depart.
 His moment's part once done upon life's stage
 Which for a time was given him from within,
 To other scenes he moves and other players
 And laughs and weeps mid faces new, unknown.
 The body thou hast loved is cast away
 Amidst the brute unchanging stuff of worlds
 To indifferent mighty Nature and becomes
 Crude matter for the joy of others' lives.
 But for our souls, upon the wheel of God
 For ever turning, they arrive and go,
 Married and sundered in the magic round
 Of the great Dancer of the boundless dance.
 Our emotions are but high and dying notes
 Of his wild music changed compellingly
 By the passionate movements of a seeking Heart
 In the incessant links of hour with hour.
 To call down heaven's distant answering song,
 To cry to an unseized bliss is all we dare;
 Once seized, we lose the heavenly music's sense;
 Too near, the rhythmic cry has fled or failed;
 All sweetnesses are baffling symbols here.
 Love dies before the lover in our breast:
 Our joys are perfumes in a brittle vase.
 O then what wreck is this upon Time's sea
 To spread life's sails to the hurricane desire

SAVITRI

And call for pilot the unseeing heart!
 O child, wilt thou proclaim, wilt thou then follow
 Against the Law that is the eternal will
 The autarchy of the rash titan's mood
 To whom his own fierce will is the one law
 In a world where Truth is not, nor Light nor God?
 Only the gods can speak what now thou speakst.
 Thou who art human, think not like a god.
 For man, below the god, above the brute,
 Is given the calm reason as his guide;
 He is not driven by an unthinking will
 As are the actions of the bird and beast;
 He is not moved by stark Necessity
 Like the senseless motion of inconscient things.
 The giant's and the titan's furious march
 Climbs to usurp the kingdom of the gods
 Or skirts the demon magnitudes of Hell;
 In the unreflecting passion of their hearts
 They dash their lives against the eternal Law
 And fall and break by their own violent mass:
 The middle path is made for thinking man.
 To choose his steps by reason's vigilant light,
 To choose his path among the many paths
 Is given him, for each his difficult goal
 Hewn out of infinite possibility.
 Leave not thy goal to follow a beautiful face.
 Only when thou hast climbed above thy mind
 And livst in the calm vastness of the One
 Can love be eternal in the eternal bliss
 And Love divine replace the human tie.
 There is a shrouded law, an austere force:
 It bids thee strengthen thy undying spirit;
 It offers its severe benignances
 Of work and thought and measured grave delight
 As steps to climb to God's far secret heights.
 Then is our life a tranquil pilgrimage,
 Each year a mile from the heavenly Way,
 Each dawn opens into a larger Light.
 Thy acts are thy helpers, or events are signs,
 Waking and sleep are opportunities

BOOK VI CANTO I

Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Ashram
BANKURA

Given to thee by an immortal Power:
 So canst thou raise thy pure unvanquished spirit
 Till spread to heaven in a wide vesper calm
 Indifferent and gentle as the sky,
 It greatens slowly into timeless peace."
 But Savitri replied with steadfast eyes:
 "My will is part of the eternal will,
 My fate is what my spirit's strength can make,
 My fate is what my spirit's strength can bear;
 My strength is not the titan's, it is God's.
 I have discovered my glad reality
 Beyond my body in another's being:
 I have found the deep unchanging soul of love.
 Then how shall I desire a lonely good,
 Or slay, aspiring to white vacant peace,
 The endless hope that made my soul spring forth
 Out of its infinite solitude and sleep?
 My spirit has glimpsed the glory for which it came,
 Beating of one vast heart in the flame of things,
 My eternity clasped by his eternity
 And, tireless of the sweet abysses of Time,
 Deep possibility always to love.
 This, this is first, last joy and to its throb
 The riches of a thousand fortunate years
 Are a poverty. Nothing to me are death and grief
 Or ordinary lives and happy days.
 And what to me are common souls of men
 Or eyes and lips that are not Satyavan's?
 I have no need to draw back from his arms
 And the discovered paradise of his love
 And journey into a still infinity.
 Only now for my soul in Satyavan
 I treasure the rich occasion of my birth:
 In sunlight and a dream of emerald ways
 I shall walk with him like gods in Paradise.
 If for a year, that year is all my life
 And yet I know this is not all my fate
 Only to live and love awhile and die.
 For I know now why my spirit came on earth
 And who I am and who he is I love.

SAVITRI

I have looked at him from my immortal Self,
I have seen God smile at me in Satyavan;
I have seen the Eternal in a human face.”
Then none could answer to her words. Silent
They sat and looked into the eyes of Fate.

CANTO TWO

THE WAY OF FATE AND THE PROBLEM
OF PAIN

A SILENCE sealed the irrevocable decree,
 The word of Fate that fell from the heavenly lips
 Fixing a doom no power could ever reverse
 Unless heaven's will itself could change its course.
 Or so it seemed; yet from the silence rose
 One voice that questioned changeless destiny.
 A will that strove against the immutable Will,
 A mother's heart had heard the fateful speech
 That rang like a sanction to the call of death
 And came like a chill close to life and hope.
 Yet hope sank down like an extinguished fire.
 She felt the leaden inevitable hand
 Invade the secrecy of her guarded soul
 And smite with sudden pain its still content
 And the empire of her hard-won quietude.
 Awhile she fell to the level of human mind,
 A field of mortal grief and Nature's law
 She shared, she bore the common lot of men
 And felt what common hearts endure in Time.
 Voicing earth's question to the inscrutable power
 The queen now turned to the still immobile seer:
 Assailed by the discontent in Nature's depths,
 Partner in the agony of dumb driven things
 And all the misery, all the ignorant cry,
 Passionate like sorrow questioning heaven she spoke.
 Awhile she lost her spirit's tranquil poise,
 Awhile she shared the lot of common souls
 And bore the heavy hand of Death and Time
 And felt the anguish in life's stricken deeps.
 Lending her speech to the surface soul on earth

SAVITRI

She uttered the suffering in the world's dumb heart
 And man's revolt against his ignorant fate.
 "O seer, in the earth's strange twi-natured life,
 By what pitiless adverse Necessity
 Or what cold freak of a Creator's will,
 By what random accident or governed Chance
 That shaped a rule out of fortuitous steps,
 Made destiny from an hour's emotion, came
 The direr mystery of grief and pain?
 Is it thy God who made this cruel law?
 Or some disastrous Power has marred his work
 And he stands helpless to defend or save?
 A fatal seed was sown in life's false start
 When evil twinned with good on earthly soil.
 Then first appeared the malady of mind,
 Its pang of thought, its quest for the aim of life.
 It twisted into forms of good and ill
 The frank simplicity of the animal's acts;
 It turned the straight path hewn by the body's gods,
 Followed the zigzag of the uncertain course
 Of life that wanders seeking for its aim
 In the pale starlight falling from thought's skies;
 It guides the unsure idea, the wavering will.
 Lost was the instinct's safe identity
 With the arrow-point of being's inmost sight,
 Marred the sure steps of Nature's simple walk
 And truth and freedom in the growing soul.
 Out of some ageless innocence and peace,
 Privilege of souls not yet betrayed to birth,
 Cast down to suffer on this hard dangerous earth
 Our life was born in pain and with a cry.
 Although earth-nature welcomes heaven's breath
 Inspiring Matter with the will to live,
 A thousand ills assail the mortal's hours
 And wear away the natural joy of life;
 Our bodies are an engine cunningly made,
 But for all its parts as cunningly are planned,
 Contrived ingeniously with demon skill
 Its apt inevitable heritage
 Of mortal danger and peculiar pain,

BOOK VI CANTO II

Its payment of the tax of Time and Fate,
 Its way to suffer and its way to die.
 This is the ransom of our high estate,
 The sign and stamp of our humanity.
 A grisly company of maladies
 Come, licensed lodgers, into man's bodily house,
 Purveyors of death and torturers of life.
 In the malignant hollows of the world,
 In its subconscious cavern-passages
 Ambushed they lie waiting their hour to leap,
 Surrounding with danger the sieged city of life:
 Admitted into the citadel of man's days
 They mine his force and maim or suddenly kill.
 Ourselves within us lethal forces nurse;
 We make of our own enemies our guests:
 Out of their holes like beasts they creep and gnaw
 The chords of the divine musician's lyre
 Till frayed and thin the music dies away
 Or crashing snaps with a last tragic note.
 All that we are is like a fort beset:
 All that we strive to be alters like a dream
 In the grey sleep of Matter's ignorance.
 Mind suffers lamed by the world's disharmony
 And the unloveliness of human things.
 A treasure misspent or cheaply, fruitlessly sold
 In the bazar of a blind destiny,
 A gift of priceless values from Time's gods
 Lost or mislaid in an uncaring world,
 Life is a marvel missed, an art gone wry;
 A seeker in a dark and obscure place,
 An ill-armed warrior facing dreadful odds,
 An imperfect worker given a baffling task,
 An ignorant judge of problems Ignorance made,
 Its heavenward flights reach closed and keyless gates,
 Its glorious outbursts peter out in mire.
 On Nature's gifts to man a curse was laid.
 All walks inarmed by its own opposites,
 Error is the comrade of our mortal thought,
 And falsehood lurks in the deep bosom of truth,
 Sin poisons with its vivid flowers of joy

SAVITRI

Or leaves a red scar burnt across the soul;
 Virtue is a grey bondage and a gaol. .
 At every step is laid for us a snare.
 Alien to reason and the spirit's light,
 Our fount of action from a darkness wells;
 In ignorance and nescience are our roots.
 A growing register of calamities
 Is the past's account, the future's book of Fate:
 The centuries pile man's follies and man's crimes
 Upon the countless crowd of Nature's ills;
 As if the world's stone load was not enough,
 A crop of miseries obstinately is sown
 By his own hand in the furrows of the gods,
 The vast increasing tragic harvest reaped
 From old misdeeds buried by oblivious Time.
 He walks by his own choice into hell's trap;
 This mortal creature is his own worst foe.
 His science is an artificer of doom;
 He ransacks earth for means to harm his kind;
 He slays his happiness and others' good.
 Nothing has he learnt from time and its history;
 Even as of old in the raw youth of Time,
 When earth ignorant ran on the highways of Fate,
 Old forms of evil cling to the world's soul:
 War making nought the sweet smiling calm of life,
 Battle and rapine, ruin and massacre
 Are still the fierce pastimes of man's warring tribes;
 An idiot hour destroys what centuries made,
 His wanton rage or frenzied hate lays low
 The beauty and greatness by his genius wrought
 And the mighty output of a nation's toil.
 All he has achieved he drags to the precipice.
 His grandeur he turns to an epic of doom and fall;
 His littleness crawls content through squalor and mud,
 He calls heaven's retribution on his head,
 And wallows in his self-made misery.
 A part author of the cosmic tragedy,
 His will conspires with death and time and fate.
 His brief appearance on the enigmaed earth
 Ever recurs, but brings no high result

BOOK VI CANTO II

To this wanderer through the aeon-rings of God
 That shut his life in their vast longevity.
 His soul's wide search and ever returning hopes
 Pursue the useless orbit of their course
 In a vain repetition of lost toils
 Across a track of soon forgotten lives.
 All is an episode in a meaningless tale.
 Why is it all and wherefore are we here?
 If to some being of eternal bliss
 It is our spirit's destiny to return
 Or some still impersonal height of endless calm,
 Since That we are and out of That we came,
 Whence rose the strange and sterile interlude
 Lasting in vain through interminable Time?
 Or if these beings must be and their brief lives,
 What need had the soul of ignorance and tears?
 Whence rose the call for sorrow and for pain?
 Or all came helplessly without a cause?
 What power forced the immortal spirit to birth?
 The eternal witness once of eternity,
 A deathless sojourner mid transient scenes
 He camps in life's half-lit obscurity
 Amid the debris of his thoughts and dreams.
 Or who persuaded it to fall from bliss
 And forfeit its immortal privilege?
 Who laid on it the ceaseless will to live
 A wanderer in this beautiful, sorrowful world,
 And bear its load of joy and grief and love?
 Or if no being watches the works of Time,
 What hard impersonal Necessity
 Compels the vain toil of brief living things?
 A great Illusion then has built the stars.
 But where then is the soul's security,
 Its poise in this circling of unreal suns?
 Or else it is a wanderer from its home
 Who strayed into a blind alley of Time and chance
 And finds no issue from a meaningless world.
 Or where begins and ends Illusion's reign?
 Perhaps the soul we feel is only a dream,
 Eternal self a fiction sensed in trance."

SAVITRI

Then after a silence Narad made reply:
 Tuning his lips to earthly sound he spoke,
 And something now of the deep sense of fate
 Weighted the fragile hints of mortal speech.
 His forehead shone with vision solemnised,
 Turned to a tablet of supernal thoughts
 As if characters of an unwritten tongue
 Had left in its breadth the inscriptions of the gods.
 Bare in that Light Time toiled, his unseen works
 Detected, the broad-flung far-seeing schemes
 Unfinished which his aeoned flight unrolls
 Were mapped already in that world-wide look:
 "Was then the sun a dream because there is night?
 Hidden in the mortal's heart the Eternal lives:
 He lives secret in the chamber of thy soul,
 A light shines there nor pain nor grief can cross.
 A darkness stands between thyself and him,
 Thou canst not hear or feel the marvellous Guest,
 Thou canst not see the beatific sun.
 O queen, thy thought is a light of the Ignorance,
 Its brilliant curtain hides from thee God's face.
 It illumines a world born from the Inconscience,
 But hides the Immortal's meaning in the world.
 Thy mind's light hides from thee the Eternal's thought,
 Thy heart's hopes hide from thee the Eternal's will,
 Earth's joys shut from thee the Immortal's bliss.
 Thence rose the need of a dark intruding god,
 The world's dread teacher, the creator, pain.
 Where Ignorance is, there suffering too must come;
 Thy grief is a cry of darkness to the Light;
 Pain was the first-born of the Inconscience
 Which was thy body's dumb original base;
 Already slept there pain's subconscious shape:
 A shadow in a shadowy tenebrous womb,
 Till life shall move, it waits to wake and be.
 In one caul with joy came forth the dreadful Power.
 In life's breast it was born hiding its twin;
 But pain came first, then only joy could be.
 Pain ploughed the first hard ground of the world-drowse.
 By pain a spirit started from the clod,

BOOK VI CANTO II

By pain Life stirred in the subliminal deep.
 Interned, submerged, hidden in Matter's trance
 Awoke to itself the dreamer, sleeping Mind;
 It made a visible realm out of its dreams,
 It drew its shapes from the subconscious depths,
 Then turned to look upon the world it had made.
 By pain and joy, the bright and tenebrous twins,
 The inanimate world perceived its sentient soul,
 Else had the Inconscient never suffered change.
 Pain is the hammer of the gods to break
 A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,
 His slow inertia as of living stone.
 • If the heart were not forced to want and weep,
 His soul would have lain down content, at ease,
 And never thought to exceed the human start
 And never learned to climb towards the Sun.
 This earth is full of labour, packed with pain;
 Throes of an endless birth coerce her still;
 The centuries end, the ages vainly pass
 And yet the godhead in her is not born.
 The ancient Mother faces all with joy,
 Calls for the ardent pang, the grandiose thrill;
 For with pain and labour all creation comes.
 This earth is full of the anguish of the gods;
 Ever they travail driven by Time's goad,
 And strive to work out the eternal will
 And shape the life divine in mortal forms.
 His will must be worked out in human breasts
 Against the Evil that rises from the gulfs,
 Against man's ignorance and his obstinate strength,
 Against the deep folly of his human mind,
 Against the blind reluctance of his human heart.
 The spirit is doomed to pain till man is free.
 There is a clamour of battle, a tramp, a march:
 A cry arises like a moaning sea,
 A desperate laughter under the blows of death,
 A doom of blood and sweat and toil and tears.
 Men die that man may live and God be born.
 An awful Silence watches tragic Time.
 Pain is the hand of Nature sculpturing men

SAVITRI

To greatness: an inspired labour chisels
 With heavenly cruelty an unwilling mould.
 Implacable in the passion of their will,
 Lifting the hammers of titanic toil
 The demiurges of the universe work;
 They shape with giant strokes their own; their sons
 Are marked with their enormous stamp of fire.
 Although the shaping god's tremendous touch
 Is torture unbearable to mortal nerves,
 The fiery spirit grows in strength within
 And feels a joy in every titan pang.
 He who would save himself lives bare and calm;
 He who would save the race must share its pain:
 This he shall know who obeys that grandiose urge.
 The great who came to save this suffering world
 And rescue out of Time's shadow and the Law,
 Must pass beneath the yoke of grief and pain:
 They are caught by the Wheel that they had hoped to break,
 On their shoulders they must bear man's load of fate.
 Heaven's riches they bring, their sufferings count the price
 Or they pay the gift of knowledge with their lives.
 The Son of God born as the Son of man
 Has drunk the bitter cup, owned Godhead's debt,
 The debt the Eternal owes to the fallen kind
 His will has bound to death and struggling life
 That yearns in vain for rest and endless peace.
 Now is the debt paid, wiped off the original score.
 The Eternal suffers in a human form,
 He has signed salvation's testament with his blood:
 He has opened the doors of his undying peace.
 The Deity compensates the creature's claim,
 The Creator bears the law of pain and death;
 A retribution smites the incarnate God.
 His love has paved the mortal's road to Heaven:
 He has given his life and light to balance here
 The dark account of mortal ignorance.
 It is finished, the dread mysterious sacrifice,
 Offered by God's martyred body for the world;
 Gethsemane and Calvary are his lot,
 He carries the cross on which man's soul is nailed;

BOOK VI CANTO II

His escort is the curses of the crowd;
 Insult and jeer are his right's acknowledgment;
 Two thieves slain with him mock his mighty death.
 He has trod with bleeding brow the Saviour's way.
 He who has found his identity with God
 Pays with the body's death his soul's vast light.
 His knowledge immortal triumphs by his death.
 Hewn, quartered on the scaffold as he falls
 His crucified voice proclaims, "I, I am God;"
 "Yes, all is God," peals back Heaven's deathless call.
 The seed of Godhead sleeps in mortal hearts,
 The flower of Godhead grows on the world-tree:
 All shall discover God in self and things,
 But when God's messenger comes to help the world
 And lead the soul of earth to higher things,
 He too must carry the yoke he came to unloose;
 He too must bear the pang that he would heal:
 Exempt and unafflicted by earth's fate,
 How shall he cure the ills he never felt?
 He covers the world's agony with his calm;
 But though to the outward eye no sign appears
 And peace is given to our torn human hearts,
 The struggle is there and paid the unseen price;
 The fire, the strife, the wrestle are within.
 He carries the suffering world in his own breast;
 Its sins weigh on his thoughts, its grief is his:
 Earth's ancient load lies heavy on his soul;
 Night and its powers beleaguer his tardy steps,
 The titan adversary's clutch he bears;
 His march is a battle and a pilgrimage.
 Life's evil smites, he is stricken with the world's pain:
 A million wounds gape in his secret heart.
 He journeys sleepless through an unending night;
 Antagonist forces crowd across his path;
 A siege, a combat is his inner life.
 Even worse may be the cost, direr the pain:
 His large identity and all-harbouring love
 Shall bring the cosmic anguish into his depths,
 The sorrow of all living things shall come
 And knock at his doors and live within his house;

SAVITRI

A dreadful cord of sympathy can tie
 All suffering into his single grief and make
 All agony in all the worlds his own.
 He meets an ancient adversary Force,
 He is lashed with the whips that tear the world's worn heart;
 The weeping of the centuries visits his eyes:
 He wears the blood-glued fiery Centaur's shirt,
 The poison of the world has stained his throat.
 In the market-place of Matter's capital
 Amidst the chafferings of the affair called life
 He is tied to the stake of a perennial Fire,
 He burns on an unseen original verge
 That Matter may be turned to spirit stuff:
 He is the victim in his own sacrifice.
 The Immortal bound to earth's mortality
 Appearing and perishing on the roads of Time
 Creates God's moment by eternity's beats.
 He dies that the world may be new-born and live.
 Even if he escapes the fiercest fires,
 Even if the world breaks not in, a drowning sea,
 Only by hard sacrifice is high heaven earned:
 He must face the fight, the pang who would conquer Hell.
 A dark concealed hostility is lodged
 In the human depths, in the hidden heart of Time
 That claims the right to change and mar God's work.
 A secret enmity ambushes the world's march;
 It leaves a mark on thought and speech and act:
 It stamps stain and defect on all things done;
 Till it is slain peace is forbidden on earth.
 There is no visible foe, but the unseen
 Is round us, forces intangible besiege,
 Touches from alien realms, thoughts not our own
 Overtake us and compel the erring heart;
 Our lives are caught in an ambiguous net.
 An adversary Force was born of old:
 Invader of the life of mortal man,
 It hides from him the straight immortal path.
 A power came in to veil the eternal Light,
 A power opposed to the eternal will
 Diverts the messages of the infallible Word,

BOOK VI CANTO II

Contorts the contours of the cosmic plan:
 A whisper lures to evil the human heart,
 It seals up wisdom's eyes, the soul's regard,
 It is the origin of our suffering here,
 It binds earth to calamity and pain.
 This all must conquer who would bring down God's peace.
 This hidden foe lodged in the human breast
 Man must overcome or miss his higher fate.
 This is the inner war without escape.

Hard is the world-redeemer's heavy task;
 The world itself becomes his adversary,
 His enemies are the beings he came to save.
 Those he would save are his antagonists:
 This world is in love with its own ignorance,
 Its darkness turns away from the saviour light,
 It gives the cross in payment for the crown.
 His work is a trickle of splendour in a long night;
 He sees the long march of Time, the little won;
 A few are saved, the rest strive on and fail:
 A Sun has passed, on earth Night's shadow falls.
 Yes, there are happy ways near to God's sun;
 But few are they who tread the sunlit path;
 Only the pure in soul can walk in light.
 An exit is shown, a road of hard escape
 From the sorrow and the darkness and the chain;
 But how shall a few escaped release the world?
 The human mass lingers beneath the yoke.
 Escape, however high, redeems not life,
 Life that is left behind on a fallen earth.
 Escape cannot uplift the abandoned race
 Or bring to it victory and the reign of God.
 A greater power must come, a larger light.
 Although Light grows on earth and Night recedes,
 Yet till the evil is slain in its own home
 And Light invades the world's inconscient base
 And perished has the adversary Force,
 He still must labour on, his work half done.
 One yet may come armoured, invincible;
 His will immobile meets the mobile hour;

SAVITRI

The world's blows cannot bend that victor head;
 Calm and sure are his steps in the growing Night;
 The goal recedes, he hurries not his pace,
 He turns not to high voices in the Night.
 He asks no aid from the inferior gods;
 His eyes are fixed on the immutable aim.
 Man turns aside or chooses easier paths;
 He keeps to the one high and difficult road
 That sole can climb to the eternal's peaks;
 The ineffable planes already have felt his tread;
 He has made heaven and earth his instruments,
 But the limits fall from him of earth and heaven;
 Their law he transcends but uses as his means.
 He has seized life's hands, he has mastered his own heart.
 The feints of Nature mislead not his sight,
 Inflexible his look towards Truth's far end;
 Fate's deaf resistance cannot break his will.
 In the dreadful passages, the fatal paths,
 Invulnerable his soul, his heart unslain,*
 He lives through the opposition of earth's Powers
 And Nature's ambushes and the world's attacks.
 His spirit's stature transcending pain and bliss
 He fronts evil and good with calm and equal eyes.
 He too must grapple with the riddling Sphinx
 And plunge into her long obscurity.
 He has broken into the Inconscient's depths
 That veil themselves even from their own regard:
 He has seen God's slumber shape these magic worlds.
 He has watched the dumb God fashioning Matter's frame,
 Dreaming the dreams of its unknowing sleep,
 And watched the unconscious Force that built the stars.
 He has learnt the Inconscient's workings and its law,
 Its incoherent thoughts and rigid acts,
 Its hazard wastes of impulse and idea,
 The chaos of its mechanic frequencies,
 Its random calls, its whispers falsely true,
 Misleaders of the hooded listening soul.
 All things come to its ear but nothing abides;

*His heart is undismayed by adverse powers,

BOOK VI CANTO II

All rose from the silence, all goes back to its hush.
 Its somnolence founded the universe,
 Its obscure waking makes the world seem vain.
 Arisen from Nothingness and towards Nothingness turned
 Its dark and potent nescience was earth's start;
 It is the waste stuff from which all was made;
 Into its deeps creation can collapse.
 Its opposition clogs the march of the soul,
 It is the mother of our ignorance.
 He must call light into its dark abysms,
 Else never can Truth conquer Matter's sleep
 And all earth look into the eyes of God.
 All things obscure his knowledge must relume,
 All things perverse his power must unknot:
 He must pass to the other shore of falsehood's sea,
 He must enter the world's dark to bring there light.
 The heart of evil must be bared to his eyes,
 He must learn its cosmic dark Necessity,
 Its right and its dire roots in Nature's soil.
 He must know the thought that moves the demon act
 And justifies the Titan's erring pride
 And the falsehood lurking in earth's crooked dreams:
 He must enter the eternity of Night
 And know God's darkness as he knows his Sun.
 For this he must go down into the pit,
 For this he must invade the dolorous Vasts.
 Imperishable and wise and infinite,
 He still must travel Hell the world to save.
 Into the eternal Light he shall emerge
 On borders of the meeting of all worlds;
 There on the verge of Nature's summit steps
 The secret Law of each thing is fulfilled,
 All contraries heal their long dissidence.
 There meet and clasp the eternal opposites,
 There pain becomes a violent fiery joy;
 Evil turns back to its original good,
 And sorrow lies upon the breasts of Bliss:
 She has learnt to weep glad tears of happiness;
 Her gaze is charged with a wistful ecstasy.
 Then shall be ended here the Law of Pain.

SAVITRI

Earth shall be made a home of Heaven's light,
 A seer heaven-born shall lodge in human breasts;
 The superconscient beam shall touch men's eyes
 And the truth-conscious world come down to earth
 Invading Matter with the Spirit's ray
 Awaking its silence to immortal thoughts,
 Awaking the dumb heart to the living Word.
 This mortal life shall house Eternity's bliss,
 The body's self taste immortality.
 Then shall the world-redeemer's task be done.

Till then must life carry its seed of death
 And sorrow's plaint be heard in the slow Night.
 O mortal, bear this great world's law of pain,
 In thy hard passage through a suffering world
 Lean for thy soul's support on Heaven's strength,
 Turn towards high Truth; aspire to love and peace.
 A little bliss is lent thee from above,
 A touch divine upon thy human days:
 Make of thy daily way a pilgrimage,
 For through small joys and griefs thou mov'st towards God.
 Haste not towards Godhead on a dangerous road,
 Open not thy doorways to a nameless Power,
 Climb not to Godhead by the Titan's road.
 Against the Law he pits his single will,
 Across its way he throws his pride of might.
 Heavenward he clambers on a stair of storms
 Aspiring to live near the deathless Sun.
 He strives with a giant strength to wrest by force
 From life and Nature the immortals' right;
 He takes by storm the world and fate and heaven.
 He comes not to the high world-maker's seat,
 He waits not for the outstretched hand of God
 To raise him out of his mortality.
 All he would make his own, leave nothing free,
 Stretching his small self to cope with the infinite.
 Obstructing the gods' open ways he makes
 His own estate of the earth's air and light;
 A monopolist of the world-energy,
 He dominates the life of common men.

BOOK VI CANTO II

His pain and others' pain he makes his means:
 On death and suffering he builds his throne.
 In the hurry and clangour of his acts of might,
 In a riot and excess of fame and shame,
 By his magnitudes of hate and violence,
 By the quaking of the world beneath his tread
 He matches himself against the Eternal's calm
 And feels in himself the greatness of a god:
 Power is his image of celestial self.
 The Titan's heart is a sea of fire and force;
 He exults in the death of things and ruin and fall,
 He feeds his strength with his own and others' pain;
 In the world's pathos and passion he takes delight,
 His pride, his might call for the struggle and pang.
 He glories in the sufferings of the flesh
 And covers the stigmata with the Stoic's name.
 His eyes blinded and visionless stare at the sun,
 The seeker's sight receding from his heart
 Can find no more the light of eternity;
 He sees the beyond as an emptiness void of soul
 And takes his night for a dark infinite.
 His nature magnifies the unreal's blank
 And sees in Nought the sole reality:
 He would stamp his single figure on the world,
 Obsess the world's rumours with his single name.
 His moments centre the vast universe.
 He sees his little self as very God.
 His little "I" has swallowed the whole world,
 His ego has stretched into infinity.
 His mind, a beat in original Nothingness,
 Ciphers his thought on a slate of hourless Time.
 He builds on a mighty vacancy of soul
 A huge philosophy of Nothingness.
 In him Nirvana lives and speaks and acts
 Impossibly creating a universe.
 An eternal zero is his formless self,
 His spirit the void impersonal absolute.
 Take not that stride, O growing soul of man;
 Cast not thy self into that night of God.
 The soul suffering is not eternity's key,

SAVITRI

Or ransom by sorrow, heaven's demand on life.
 O mortal, bear, but ask not for the stroke,
 Too soon will grief and anguish find thee out.
 Too enormous is that venture for thy will;
 Only in limits can man's strength be safe;
 Yet is infinity thy spirit's goal;
 Its bliss is there behind the world's face of tears.
 A power is in thee that thou knowest not;
 Thou art a vessel of the imprisoned spark.
 It seeks relief from Time's envelopment,
 And while thou shutst it in, the seal is pain:
 Bliss is the Godhead's crown, eternal, free,
 Unburdened by life's blind mystery of pain:
 Pain is the signature of the Ignorance
 Attesting the secret god denied by life:
 Until life finds him pain can never end.
 Calm is self's victory overcoming fate.
 Bear; thou shalt find at last thy road to bliss.
 Bliss is the secret stuff of all that lives,
 Even pain and grief are garbs of world-delight,
 It hides behind thy sorrow and thy cry.
 Because thy strength is a part and not God's whole,
 Because afflicted by the little self
 Thy consciousness forgets to be divine
 As it walks in the vague penumbra of the flesh
 And cannot bear the world's tremendous touch,
 Thou criest out and sayst that there is pain.
 Indifference, pain and joy, a triple disguise,
 Attire of the rapturous Dancer in the ways,
 Withhold from thee the body of God's bliss.
 Thy spirit's strength shall make thee one with God,
 Thy agony shall change to ecstasy,
 Indifference deepen into infinity's calm
 And joy laugh nude on the peaks of the Absolute.

O mortal who complainst of death and fate,
 Accuse none of the harms thyself hast called;
 This troubled world thou hast chosen for thy home,
 Thou art thyself the author of thy pain.
 Once in the immortal boundlessness of Self,

BOOK VI CANTO II

In a vast of Truth and Consciousness and Light
 The soul looked out from its felicity.
 It felt the Spirit's interminable bliss,
 It knew itself deathless, timeless, spaceless, one,
 It saw the Eternal, lived in the Infinite.
 Then, curious of a shadow thrown by Truth,
 It strained towards some otherness of self,
 It was drawn to an unknown Face peering through night.
 It sensed a negative infinity,
 A void supernal whose immense excess
 Imitating God and everlasting Time
 Offered a ground for Nature's adverse birth
 And Matter's rigid hard unconsciousness
 Harbours the brilliance of a transient soul
 That lights up birth and death and ignorant life.
 A Mind arose that stared at Nothingness
 Till figures formed of what could never be;
 It housed the contrary of all that is.
 A Nought appeared as Being's huge sealed cause,
 Its dumb support in a blank infinite,
 In whose abysm spirit must disappear:
 A darkened Nature lived and held the seed
 Of Spirit hidden and feigning not to be.
 The eternal Consciousness became the home
 Of some unsouled almighty Inconscient;
 One breathed no more the spirit's native air.
 A stranger in the insentient universe,
 Bliss was the incident of a mortal hour.
 As one drawn by the grandeur of the Void
 The soul attracted leaned to the Abyss:
 It longed for the adventure of Ignorance
 And the marvel and surprise of the Unknown
 And the endless possibility that lurked
 In the womb of Chaos and in Nothing's gulf
 Or looked from the unfathomed eyes of Chance.
 It tired of its unchanging happiness,
 It turned away from immortality:
 It was drawn to hazard's call and danger's charm,
 It yearned to the pathos of grief, the drama of pain,
 Perdition's peril, the wounded bare escape,

SAVITRI

The music of ruin and its glamour and crash,
 The savour of pity and the gamble of love
 And passion and the ambiguous face of Fate.
 A world of hard endeavour and difficult toil
 And battle on extinction's perilous verge,
 A clash of forces, a vast incertitude,
 The joy of creation out of Nothingness,
 Strange meetings on the roads of Ignorance
 And the companionship of half-known souls
 Or the solitary greatness and lonely force
 Of a separate being conquering its world,
 Called it from its too safe eternity.
 A huge descent began, a giant fall:
 For what the spirit sees, creates a truth
 And what the soul imagines is made a world.
 A Thought that leaped from the Timeless can become,
 Indicator of cosmic consequence
 And the itinerary of the gods,
 A cyclic movement in eternal Time.
 Thus came, born from a blind tremendous choice,
 This great perplexed and discontented world,
 This haunt of Ignorance, this home of Pain:
 There are pitched desire's tents, grief's headquarters.
 A vast disguise conceals the Eternal's bliss."

Then Aswapathy answered to the seer:
 "Is then the spirit ruled by an outward world?
 O seer, is there no remedy within?
 But what is fate if not the spirit's will
 After long time fulfilled by cosmic Force?
 I deemed a mighty Power had come with her;
 Is not that Power the high compeer of Fate?"
 But Narad answered covering truth with truth:
 "O Aswapathy, random seem the ways
 Along whose banks your footsteps stray or run
 In casual hours and moments of the gods,
 Yet your least stumblings are foreseen above.
 Infallibly the curves of life are drawn
 Following the stream of Time through the unknown;
 They are led by a clue the calm immortals keep.

BOOK VI CANTO II

This blazoned hieroglyph of prophet moons
 A meaning more sublime in symbols writes
 Than sealed Thought wakes to, but of this high script
 How shall my voice convince the mind of earth?
 Heaven's wiser love rejects the mortal's prayer;
 Unblinded by the breath of his desire,
 Unclouded by the mists of fear and hope,
 It bends above the strife of love with death;
 It keeps for her her privilege of pain.
 A greatness in thy daughter's soul resides
 That can transform herself and all around,
 But must cross on stones of suffering to its goal.
 Although designed like a nectar cup of heaven,
 Of heavenly ether made she sought this air,
 She too must share the human need of grief
 And all her cause of joy transmute to pain.
 The mind of mortal man is led by words,
 His sight retires behind the walls of Thought
 And looks out only through half-opened doors.
 He cuts the boundless Truth into sky-strips
 And every strip he takes for all the heavens.
 He stares at infinite Possibility
 And gives to the plastic Vast the name of Chance.
 He sees the long results of an all-wise Force
 Planning a sequence of steps in endless Time,
 But in its links imagines a senseless chain
 Or the dead hand of cold Necessity;
 He answers not to the mystic Mother's heart,
 Misses the ardent heavings of her breast
 And feels cold rigid limbs of lifeless Law.
 The will of the Timeless working out in Time
 In the free absolute steps of cosmic Truth
 Appears a hard machine or meaningless Fate.
 A Magician's formulas have made Matter's laws
 And while they last, all things by them are bound:
 But the Spirit's consent is needed for each act
 And freedom walks in the same pace with Law.
 All here can change if the Magician choose.
 If human will could be made one with God's,
 If human thought could echo the thoughts of God,

SAVITRI

Man might be all-knowing and omnipotent;
 But now he walks in Nature's doubtful ray.
 Yet can the mind of man receive God's light,
 The force of man can be driven by God's force,
 Then is he a miracle doing miracles.
 For only so can he be Nature's King.
 It is decreed and Satyavan must die;
 The hour is fixed, chosen the fatal stroke.
 What else shall be is written in her soul.
 But till the hour reveals the fateful script
 The writing waits illegible and mute.
 Fate is Truth working out in Ignorance.
 O King, thy fate is a transaction done
 At every hour between Nature and thy soul
 With God for its foreseeing arbiter.
 Fate is a balance drawn in Destiny's book.
 Man can accept his fate, he can refuse.
 Even if the One maintains the unseen decree
 He writes thy refusal in thy credit page:
 For doom is not a close, a mystic seal.
 Arisen from the tragic crash of life,
 Arisen from the body's torture and death,
 The spirit rises mightier by defeat;
 Its godlike wings grow wider with each fall.
 Its splendid failures sum to victory.
 O man, the events that meet thee on thy road,
 Though they smite thy body and soul with joy and grief,
 Are not thy fate; they touch thee awhile and pass;
 Even death can cut not short thy spirit's walk:
 Thy goal, the road thou choosest are thy fate.
 On the altar throwing thy thoughts, thy heart, thy works,
 Thy fate is a long sacrifice to the gods
 Till they have opened to thee thy secret self
 And made thee one with the indwelling God.
 O soul, intruder in Nature's ignorance,
 Armed traveller to the unseen supernal heights,
 Thy spirit's fate is a battle and ceaseless march
 Against invisible opponent Powers,
 A passage from Matter into timeless Self.
 Adventurer through blind unforeseeing Time,

BOOK VI CANTO II

A forced advance through a long line of lives,
 It pushes its spearhead through the centuries.
 Across the dust and mire of the earthly plain,
 On many-guarded lines and dangerous fronts,
 In dire assaults, in wounded slow retreats,
 Or holding the ideal's battered fort
 Or fighting against odds in lonely posts,
 Or camped in night around the bivouac's fires,
 Awaiting the tardy trumpets of the dawn
 In hunger and in plenty and in pain,
 Through peril and through triumph and through fall,
 Through life's green lanes and over her desert sands,
 Up the bald moor, along the sunlit ridge
 In serried columns with a straggling rear
 Led by its nomad vanguard's signal fires,
 Marches the army of the waylost god.
 Then late the joy ineffable is felt,
 Then he remembers his forgotten self;
 He has refound the skies from which he fell.
 At length his front's indomitable line
 Forces the last passes of the Ignorance:
 Advancing beyond Nature's last known bounds,
 Reconnoitring the formidable unknown,
 Beyond the landmarks of things visible,
 It mounts through a miraculous upper air
 Till climbing the mute summit of the world
 He stands upon the splendour-peaks of God.
 In vain thou mournst that Satyavan must die;
 His death is a beginning of greater life,
 Death is the spirit's opportunity.
 A vast intention has brought the souls close
 And love and death conspire towards one great end.
 For out of danger and pain heaven-bliss shall come,
 Time's unforeseeing event, God's secret plan.
 This world was not built with random bricks of chance,
 A blind god is not destiny's architect;
 A conscious power has drawn the plan of life,
 There is a meaning in each curve and line.
 It is an architecture high and grand
 By many named and nameless masons built

SAVITRI

In which unseeing hands obey the Unseen,
And of its master-builders she is one.

Queen, strive no more to change the secret will;
Time's accidents are steps in its vast scheme.
Bring not thy brief and helpless human tears
Across the fathomless moments of a heart
That knows its single will and God's as one:
It can embrace its hostile destiny;
It sits apart with grief and facing death,
Affronting adverse fate armed and alone.
In this enormous world standing apart
In the mightiness of her silent spirit's will,
In the passion of her soul of sacrifice
Her lonely strength facing the universe,
Affronting fate, asks not man's help nor god's:
Sometimes one life is charged with earth's destiny,
It cries not for succour from the time-bound powers.
Alone she is equal to her mighty task.
Intervene not in a strife too great for thee,
A struggle too deep for mortal thought to sound,
Its question to this Nature's rigid bounds
When the soul fronts nude of garbs the infinite,
Its too vast theme of a lonely mortal will
Pacing the silence of eternity.
As a star, uncompanioned, moves in heaven
Unastonished by the immensities of space,
Travelling infinity by its own light,
The great are strongest when they stand alone.
A God-given might of being is their force,
A ray from self's solitude of light the guide;
The soul that can live alone with itself meets God;
Its lonely universe is their rendezvous.
A day may come when she must stand unhelped
On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and hers.
Carrying the world's future on her lonely breast,
Carrying the human hope in a heart left sole
To conquer or fail on a last desperate verge;
Alone with death and close to extinction's edge,
Her single greatness in that last dire scene,
She must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time

BOOK VI CANTO II

And reach an apex of world-destiny
 Where all is won or all is lost for man.
 In that tremendous silence lone and lost
 Of a deciding hour in the world's fate,
 In her soul's climbing beyond mortal time
 When she stands sole with Death or sole with God
 Apart upon a silent desperate brink
 Alone with her self and death and destiny
 As on some verge between Time and Timelessness
 When being must end or life rebuild its base,
 Alone she must conquer or alone must fall.
 No human aid can reach her in that hour,
 No armoured God stand shining at her side.
 Cry not to heaven, for she alone can save.
 For this the silent Force came missioned down;
 In her the conscious Will took human shape:
 She only can save herself and save the world.
 O queen, stand back from that stupendous scene,
 Come not between her and her hour of Fate.
 Her hour must come and none can intervene:
 Think not to turn her from her heaven-sent task,
 Strive not to save her from her own high will.
 Thou hast no place in that tremendous strife;
 Thy love and longing are not arbiters there,
 Leave the world's fate and her to God's sole guard.
 Even if he seems to leave her to her lone strength,
 Even though all falters and falls and sees an end
 And the heart fails and only are death and night,
 God-given her strength can battle against doom
 Even on a brink where Death alone seems close
 And no human strength can hinder or can help.
 Think not to intercede with the hidden Will,
 Intrude not twixt her spirit and its force
 But leave her to her mighty self and Fate."

He spoke and ceased and left the earthly scene.
 Away from the strife and suffering on our globe,
 He turned towards his far-off blissful home.
 A brilliant arrow pointing straight to heaven,
 The luminous body of the eternal seer

SAVITRI

Assailed the purple glory of the noon
And disappeared like a receding star
Vanishing into the light of the Unseen;
But still a cry was heard in the infinite,
And still to the listening soul on mortal earth
A high and far imperishable voice
Chanted the anthem of eternal love.

END OF BOOK SIX

BOOK SEVEN
The Book of Yoga

CANTO ONE

THE JOY OF UNION; THE ORDEAL OF THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF DEATH AND THE HEART'S GRIEF

FATE followed her foreseen immutable road.
 Man's hopes and longings build the journeying wheels
 That bear the body of his destiny
 And lead his blind will towards an unknown goal.
 His fate within him shapes his acts and rules;
 Its face and form already are born in him,
 Its parentage is in his secret soul;
 Here Matter seems to mould the body's life
 And the soul follows where its nature drives:
 Nature and Fate compel his free-will's choice.
 But greater spirits this balance can reverse
 And make the soul the artist of its fate.
 This is the mystic truth our ignorance hides:
 Doom is a passage for our inborn force,
 Our ordeal is the hidden spirit's choice,
 Anankē is our being's own decree.
 All was fulfilled the heart of Savitri
 Flower-sweet and adamant, passionate and calm,
 Had chosen and on her strength's unbending road
 Forced to its issue the long cosmic curve.
 Once more she sat behind loud hastening hooves;
 A speed of armoured squadrons and a voice
 Far-heard of chariots bore her from her home.
 A couchant earth wakened in its dumb muse
 Looked up at her from a vast indolence:
 Hills wallowing in a bright haze, large lands
 That lolled at ease beneath the summer heavens,
 Region on region spacious in the sun,

SAVITRI

Cities like chrysolites in the wide blaze
 And yellow rivers pacing, lion-maned,
 Led to the Shalwa marches' emerald line,
 A happy front to iron vastnesses
 And austere peaks and titan solitudes.
 Once more was near the fair and fated place,
 The borders gleaming with the groves' delight
 Where first she met the face of Satyavan
 And he saw like one waking into a dream
 Some timeless beauty and reality,
 The moon-gold sweetness of heaven's earth-born child.
 The past receded and the future neared:
 Far now behind lay Madra's spacious halls,
 The white carved pillars, the cool dim alcoves,
 The tinged mosaic of the crystal floors,
 The towered pavilions, the wind-rippled pools
 And gardens humming with the murmur of bees,
 Forgotten soon or a pale memory
 The fountain's plash in the wide stone-bound pool,
 The thoughtful noontide's brooding solemn trance,
 The colonnade's dream grey in the quiet eve,
 The slow moonrise gliding in front of Night.
 Left far behind were now the faces known,
 The happy silken babble on laughter's lips
 And the close-clinging clasp of intimate hands
 And adoration's light in cherished eyes
 Offered to the one sovereign of their life.
 Nature's primeval loneliness was here:
 Here only was the voice of bird and beast,—
 The ascetic's exile in the dim-souled huge
 Inhuman forest far from cheerful sound
 Of man's blithe converse and his crowded days.
 In a broad eve with one red eye of cloud,
 Through a narrow opening, a green flowered cleft,
 Out of the stare of sky and soil they came
 Into a mighty home of emerald dusk.
 There onward led by a faint brooding path
 Which toiled through the shadow of enormous trunks
 And under arches misers of sunshine,
 They saw low thatched roofs of a hermitage

BOOK VII CANTO I

Huddled beneath a patch of azure hue
 In a sunlit clearing that seemed the outbreak
 Of a glad smile in the forest's monstrous heart,
 A rude refuge of the thought and will of man
 Watched by the crowding giants of the wood.
 Arrived in that rough-hewn homestead they gave,
 Questioning no more the strangeness of her fate,
 Their pride and loved one to the great blind king,
 A regal pillar of fallen mightiness
 And the stately care-worn woman once a queen
 Who now hoped nothing for herself from life,
 But all things only hoped for her one child,
 Calling on that single head from partial Fate
 All joy of earth, all heaven's beatitude.
 Adoring wisdom and beauty like a young god's,
 She saw him loved by heaven as by herself,
 She rejoiced in his brightness and believed in his fate
 And knew not of the evil drawing near.
 Lingered some days upon the forest verge
 Like men who lengthen out departure's pain,
 Unwilling to separate sorrowful clinging hands,
 Unwilling to see for the last time a face,
 Heavy with the sorrow of a coming day
 And wondering at the carelessness of Fate
 Who breaks with idle hands her supreme works,
 They parted from her with pain-fraught burdened hearts
 As forced by inescapable fate we part
 From one whom we shall never see again;
 Driven by the singularity of her fate,
 Helpless against the choice of Savitri's heart
 They left her to her rapture and her doom
 In the tremendous forest's savage charge.
 All put behind her that was once her life,
 All welcomed that henceforth was his and hers,
 She abode with Satyavan in the wild woods:
 Priceless she deemed her joy so close to death;
 Apart with love she lived for love alone.
 As if self-poised above the march of days,
 Her immobile spirit watched the haste of Time,
 A statue of passion and invincible force,

SAVITRI

An absolutism of sweet imperious will,
 A tranquillity and a violence of the gods
 Indomitable and immutable.

At first to her beneath the sapphire heavens
 The sylvan solitude was a gorgeous dream,
 An altar of the summer's splendour and fire,
 A sky-topped flower-hung palace of the gods
 And all its scenes a smile on rapture's lips
 And all its voices bards of happiness.
 There was a chanting in the casual wind,
 There was a glory in the least sunbeam;
 Night was a chrysoprase on velvet cloth,
 A nestling darkness or a moonlit deep;
 Day was a purple pageant and a hymn,
 A wave of the laughter of light from morn to eve.
 His absence was a dream of memory,
 His presence was the empire of a god.
 A fusing of the joys of earth and heaven,
 A tremulous blaze of nuptial rapture passed,
 A rushing of two spirits to be one,
 A burning of two bodies in one flame.
 Opened were gates of unforgettable bliss:
 Two lives were locked within an earthly heaven
 And fate and grief fled from that fiery hour.
 But soon now failed the summer's ardent breath
 And throngs of blue-black clouds crept through the sky
 And rain fled sobbing over the dripping leaves
 And storm became the forest's titan voice.
 Then listening to the thunder's fatal crash
 And the fugitive pattering footsteps of the showers
 And the long unsatisfied panting of the wind
 And sorrow muttering in the sound-vexed night,
 The grief of all the world came near to her:
 Night's darkness seemed her future's ominous face.
 The shadow of her lover's doom arose
 And fear laid hands upon her mortal heart.
 The moments swift and ruthless raced; alarmed
 Her thoughts, her mind remembered Narad's date.
 A trembling moved accountant of her riches,

BOOK VII CANTO I

She reckoned the insufficient days between :
 A dire expectancy knocked at her breast;
 Dreadful to her were the footsteps of the hours:
 Grief came, a passionate stranger to her gate:
 Banished when in his arms, out of her sleep
 It rose at morn to look into her face.
 Vainly she fled into abysses of bliss
 From her pursuing foresight of the end.
 The more she plunged into love that anguish grew;
 Her deepest grief from sweetest gulfs arose.
 Remembrance was a poignant pang, she felt
 Each day a golden leaf torn cruelly out
 From her too slender book of love and joy.
 Thus swaying in strong gusts of happiness,
 And swimming in foreboding's sombre waves,
 And feeding sorrow and terror with her heart,—
 For now they sat among her bosom's guests
 Or in her inner chamber paced apart,—
 Her eyes stared blind into the future's night.
 Out of her separate self she looked and saw,
 Moving amid the unconscious faces loved,
 In mind a stranger though in heart so near,
 The ignorant smiling world go happily by
 Upon its way towards an unknown doom
 And wondered at the careless lives of men.
 As if in different worlds they walked, though close,
 They confident of the returning sun,
 They wrapped in little hourly hopes and tasks,—
 She in her dreadful knowledge was alone.
 The rich and happy secrecy that once
 Enshrined her as if in a silver bower
 Apart in a bright nest of thoughts and dreams
 Made room for tragic hours of solitude
 And lonely grief that none could share or know,
 A body seeing the end too soon of joy
 And the fragile happiness of its mortal love.
 Her quiet visage still and sweet and calm,
 Her graceful daily acts were now a mask;
 In vain she looked upon her depths to find
 A ground of stillness and the spirit's peace.

SAVITRI

Still veiled from her was the silent Being within
 Who sees life's drama pass with unmoved eyes,
 Supports the sorrow of the mind and heart
 And bears in human breasts the world and fate.
 A glimpse or flashes came, the Presence was hid.
 Only her violent heart and passionate will
 Were pushed in front to meet the immutable doom;
 Defenceless, nude, bound to her human lot
 They had no means to act, no way to save.
 These she controlled, nothing was shown outside:
 She was still to them the child they knew and loved;
 The sorrowing woman they saw not within;
 No change was in her beautiful motions seen:
 A worshipped empress all once vied to serve,
 She made herself the diligent serf of all,
 Nor spared the labour of broom and jar and well,
 Or close gentle tending or to heap the fire
 Of altar and kitchen, no slight task allowed
 To others that her woman's strength might do.
 In all her acts a strange divinity shone:
 Into a simplest movement she could bring
 A oneness with earth's glowing robe of light,
 A lifting up of common acts by love.
 All-love was hers and its one heavenly cord,
 Bound all to all with her as golden tie.
 But when her grief to the surface pressed too close,
 These things, once gracious adjuncts of her joy,
 Seemed meaningless to her, a gleaming shell,
 Or were a round mechanical and void,
 Her body's actions shared not by her will.
 Always behind this strange divided life
 Her spirit like a sea of living fire
 Possessed her lover and to his body clung,
 One locked embrace to guard its threatened mate.
 All night she woke through the slow silent hours
 Brooding on the treasure of his bosom and face,
 Hung o'er the sleep-bound beauty of his brow
 Or laid her burning cheek upon his feet.
 Waking at morn her lips endlessly clung to his,
 Unwilling ever to separate again

BOOK VII CANTO I

Or lose that honeyed drain of lingering joy,
 Unwilling to loose his body from her breast,
 The warm inadequate signs that love must use.
 Intolerant of the poverty of Time
 Her passion catching at the fugitive hours
 Willed the expense of centuries in one day
 Of prodigal love and the surf of ecstasy;
 Or else she strove even in mortal time
 To build a little room for timelessness
 By the deep union of two human lives,
 Her soul secluded shut into his soul.
 After all was given she demanded still;
 Even by his strong embrace unsatisfied,
 She longed to cry, "O tender Satyavan,
 O lover of my soul, give more, give more
 Of love while yet thou canst, to her thou lovest.
 Imprint thyself for every nerve to keep
 That thrills to thee the message of my heart.
 For soon we part and who shall know how long
 Before the great wheel in its monstrous round
 Restore us to each other and our love?"
 Too well she loved to speak a fateful word
 And lay her burden on his happy head;
 She pressed the outsurging grief back into her breast
 To dwell within silent, unhelped, alone.
 But Satyavan sometimes half understood,
 Or felt at least with the uncertain answer
 Of our thought-blinded hearts the unuttered need,
 The unplumbed abyss of her deep passionate want.
 All of his speeding days that he could spare
 From labour in the forest hewing wood
 And hunting food in the wild sylvan glades
 And service to his father's sightless life
 He gave to her and helped to increase the hours
 By the nearness of his presence and his clasp,
 And lavish softness of heart-seeking words
 And the close beating felt of heart on heart.
 All was too little for her bottomless need.
 If in his presence she forgot awhile,
 Grief filled his absence with its aching touch,

SAVITRI

She saw the desert of her coming days
 Imaged in every solitary hour.
 Although with a vain imaginary bliss
 Of fiery union through death's door of escape
 She dreamed of her body robed in funeral flame,
 She knew she must not clutch that happiness
 To die with him and follow, seizing his robe
 Across our other countries, travellers glad
 Into the sweet or terrible Beyond.
 For those sad parents still would need her here
 To help the empty remnant of their day.
 Often it seemed to her the ages' pain
 Had pressed their quintessence into her single woe
 Concentrating in her a tortured world.
 Thus in the silent chamber of her soul
 Cloistering her love to live with secret grief
 She dwelt like a dumb priest with hidden gods
 Unappeased by the wordless offering of her days,
 Lifting to them her sorrow like frankincense,
 Her life the altar, herself the sacrifice.
 Yet ever they grew into each other more
 Until it seemed no power could rend apart,
 Since even the body's walls could not divide.
 For when he wandered in the forest, oft
 Her conscious spirit walked with him and knew
 His actions as if in herself he moved;
 He, less aware, thrilled with her from afar.
 Always the stature of her passion grew;
 Grief, fear became the food of mighty love.
 Increased by its torment it filled the whole world,
 It was all her life, became her whole earth and heaven.
 Although life-born, an infant of the hours,
 Immortal it walked unslayable as the gods:
 Her spirit stretched measureless in strength divine
 An anvil for the blows of Fate and Time:
 Or tired of sorrow's passionate luxury,
 Grief's self became calm, dull-eyed, resolute
 Awaiting some issue of its fiery struggle,
 Some deed in which it might for ever cease,
 Victorious over itself and death and tears.

BOOK VII CANTO I

The year now paused upon the brink of change.
No more the storms sailed with stupendous wings
And thunder strode in wrath across the world,
And still was heard a muttering in the sky
And rain dripped wearily through the mournful air
And grey slow-drifting clouds shut in the earth.
So her grief's heavy sky shut in her heart.
A still self hid behind but gave no light:
No voice came down from the forgotten heights;
Only in the privacy of its brooding pain
Her human heart spoke to the body's fate.

CANTO TWO

THE PARABLE OF THE SEARCH FOR THE SOUL

AS in the vigilance of the sleepless night
 Through the slow heavy-footed silent hours,
 Repressing in her bosom its load of grief,
 She sat staring at the dumb tread of Time
 And the approach of ever-nearing Fate,
 A summons from her being's summit came,
 A sound, a call that broke the seals of Night.
 Above her brows where will and knowledge meet
 A mighty Voice invaded mortal space.
 It seemed to come from inaccessible heights
 And yet was intimate with all the world
 And knew the meaning of the steps of Time
 And saw eternal destiny's changeless scene
 Filling the far prospect of the cosmic gaze.
 As the Voice touched, her body became a stark
 And rigid golden statue of motionless trance,
 A stone of God lit by an amethyst soul.
 Around her body's stillness all grew still:
 Her heart listened to its slow measured beats,
 Her mind renouncing thought heard and was mute:
 "Why camest thou to this dumb deathbound earth,
 This ignorant life beneath indifferent skies
 Tied like a sacrifice on the altar of Time,
 O spirit, O immortal energy,
 If 'twas to nurse grief in a helpless heart
 Or with hard tearless eyes awake thy doom?
 Arise, O soul, and vanquish Time and Death."
 But Savitri's heart replied in the dim night:
 "My strength is taken from me and given to Death,
 Why should I lift my hands to the shut heavens

BOOK VII CANTO II

Or struggle with mute inevitable Fate
 Or hope in vain to uplift an ignorant race
 Who hug their lot and mock the saviour Light
 And see in Mind Wisdom's sole tabernacle,
 In its harsh peak and its inconscient base
 A rock of safety and an anchor of sleep?
 Is there a God whom any cry can move?
 He sits in peace and leaves the mortal's strength
 Impotent against his calm omnipotent Law
 And Inconscience and the almighty hands of Death.
 What need have I, what need has Satyavan
 To avoid the black meshed net, the dismal door,
 Or call a mightier Light into life's closed room,
 A greater Law into man's little world?
 Why should I strive with earth's unyielding laws
 Or stave off death's inevitable hour?
 This surely is best to pactise with my fate
 And follow close behind my lover's steps
 And pass through night from twilight to the sun
 Across the tenebrous river that divides
 The adjoining parishes of earth and heaven.
 Then could we lie inarmed breast upon breast,
 Untroubled by thought, untroubled by our hearts,
 Forgetting man and life and time and its hours,
 Forgetting eternity's call, forgetting God."
 The Voice replied: "Is this enough, O spirit?
 And what shall thy soul say when it wakes and knows
 The work was left undone for which it came?
 Or is this all for thy being born on earth
 Charged with a mandate from eternity,
 A listener to the voices of the years,
 A follower of the footprints of the gods,
 To pass and leave unchanged the old dusty laws?
 Shall there be no new tables, no new Word,
 No greater light come down upon the earth
 Delivering her from her unconsciousness,
 Man's spirit from unalterable fate?
 Can'st thou not down to open the doors of Fate,
 The iron doors that seemed for ever closed,
 And lead man to truth's wide and golden road

SAVITRI

That runs through finite things to eternity?
 Is this then the report that I must make,
 My head bowed with shame before the Eternal's seat,—
 His power he kindled in thy body has failed,
 His labourer returns, her task undone?"

Then Savitri's heart fell mute, it spoke no word.
 But holding back her troubled rebel heart,
 Abrupt, erect and strong, calm like a hill,
 Surmounting the seas of mortal ignorance,
 Its peak immutable above mind's air,
 A Power within her answered the still Voice:
 "I am thy portion here charged with thy work,
 As thou myself seated for ever above,
 Speak to my depths, O great and deathless Voice,
 Command, for I am here to do thy will."

The Voice replied: "Remember why thou cam'st:
 Find out thy soul, recover thy hid self,
 In silence seek God's meaning in thy depths,
 Then mortal nature change to the divine.
 Open God's door, enter into his trance.
 Cast Thought from thee, that nimble ape of Light:
 In his tremendous hush stilling thy brain
 His vast Truth wake within and know and see.
 Cast from thee sense that veils thy spirit's sight:
 In the enormous emptiness of thy mind
 Thou shalt see the Eternal's body in the world,
 Know him in every voice heard by thy soul:
 In the world's contacts meet his single touch;
 All things shall fold thee into his embrace.
 Conquer thy heart's throbs, let thy heart beat in God:
 Thy nature shall be the engine of his works,
 Thy voice shall house the mightiness of his Word:
 Then shalt thou harbour my force and conquer Death."
 Then Savitri by her doomed husband sat,
 Still rigid in her golden motionless pose,
 A statue of the fire of the inner sun.
 In the black night the wrath of storm swept by,
 The thunder crashed above her, the rain hissed,
 Its million footsteps pattered on the roof.
 Impassive mid the movement and the cry,

BOOK VII CANTO II

Witness of the thoughts of mind, the moods of life,
She looked into herself and sought for her soul.

A dream disclosed to her the cosmic past,
The crypt-seed and the mystic origins,
The shadowy beginnings of world-fate:
A lamp of symbol lighting hidden truth
Imaged to her the world's significance.
In the indeterminate formlessness of Self
Creation took its first mysterious steps,
It made the body's shape a house of soul
And Matter learned to think and person grew;
She saw Space peopled with the seeds of life
And saw the human creature born in Time.
At first appeared a dim half-neutral tide
Of being emerging out of infinite Nought:
A consciousness looked at the inconscient Vast
And pleasure and pain stirred in the insensible Void.
All was the deed of a blind World-Energy:
Unconscious of her own exploits she worked,
Shaping a universe out of the Inane.
In fragmentary beings she grew aware:
A chaos of little sensibilities
Gathered round a small ego's pinpoint head;
In it a sentient creature found its poise,
It moved and lived a breathing, thinking whole.
On a dim ocean of subconscious life
A formless surface consciousness awoke:
A stream of thoughts and feelings came and went,
A foam of memories hardened and became
A bright crust of habitual sense and thought,
A seat of living personality
And recurrent habits mimicked permanence.
Mind nascent laboured out a mutable form,
It built a mobile house on shifting sands,
A floating isle upon a bottomless sea.
A conscious being was by this labour made;
It looked around it on its difficult field
In the green wonderful and perilous earth;
It hoped in a brief body to survive,

SAVITRI

Relying on Matter's false eternity.
 It felt a godhead in its fragile house;
 It saw blue heavens, dreamed immortality.

A conscious soul in the Inconscient's world
 Hidden behind our thoughts and hopes and dreams,
 An indifferent Master signing Nature's acts
 Leaves the vicegerent mind a seeming king.
 In his floating house upon the sea of Time
 This regent sits at work and never rests:
 He is a puppet of the dance of Time;
 He is driven by the hours, the moment's call
 Compels him with the thronging of life's need
 And the babel of the voices of the world.
 This mind no silence knows nor dreamless sleep,
 In the incessant circling of its steps
 Thoughts tread for ever through the listening brain;
 It toils like a machine and cannot stop.
 Into the body's many-storeyed rooms
 Endless crowd down the dream-god's messages.
 All is a hundred-toned murmur and babble and stir,
 There is a tireless running to and fro,
 A haste of movement and a ceaseless cry,
 The hurried servant senses answer apace
 To every knock upon the outer doors,
 Bring in life's visitors, report each call,
 Admit the thousand queries and the calls
 And the messages of communicating minds
 And the heavy business of unnumbered lives
 And all the thousandfold commerce of the world.
 Even in the tracts of sleep is scant repose;
 He mocks life's steps in strange subconscious dreams,
 He strays in a sublime realm of symbol scenes,
 His night with thin-air visions and dim forms
 He packs or peoples with slight drifting shapes
 And only a moment spends in silent self.
 Adventuring into infinite mind-space
 He unfolds his wings of thought in inner air,
 Or travelling in imagination's car
 Crosses the globe, journeys beneath the stars,
 To subtle worlds takes his ethereal course,

BOOK VII CANTO II

Visits the gods on life's miraculous peaks,
 Communicates with Heaven, tampers with Hell.
 This is the little surface of man's life.
 He is this and he is all the universe;
 He scales the Unseen, his depths dare the Abyss;
 A whole mysterious world is locked within.
 Unknown to himself lives a hidden king
 Behind rich tapestries in great secret rooms;
 An epicure of the spirit's unseen joys,
 He lives on the sweet honey of solitude:
 A nameless god in an unapproachable fane,
 In the secret adytum of his inmost soul
 He guards the being's covered mysteries
 Beneath the threshold behind shadowy gates
 Or shut in vast cellars of inconscient sleep.
 The immaculate Divine All-Wonderful
 Casts into the argent purity of his soul
 His splendour and his greatness and the light
 Of self-creation in Time's infinity
 As into a sublimely mirroring glass.
 Man in the world's life works out the dreams of God.
 But all is there, even God's opposites;
 He is a little front of Nature's works,
 A thinking outline of a cryptic Force.
 All she reveals in him that is in her,
 Her glories walk in him and her darknesses.
 Man's house of life holds not the gods alone:
 There are occult Shadows, there are tenebrous Powers,
 Inhabitants of life's ominous nether rooms,
 A shadowy world's stupendous denizens.
 A careless guardian of his nature's powers,
 Man harbours dangerous forces in his house.
 The Titan and the Fury and the Djinn
 Lie bound in the subconscious's cavern pit
 And the Beast grovels in his antre den:
 Dire mutterings rise and murmur in their drowse.
 Insurgent sometimes raises its huge head
 A monstrous mystery lurking in life's deeps,
 The mystery of dark and fallen worlds,
 The dread visages of the adversary Kings.

SAVITRI

The dreadful powers held down within his depths
 Become his masters or his ministers;
 Enormous they invade his bodily house,
 Can act in his acts, infest his thought and life.
 Inferno surges into the human air
 And touches all with a perverting breath.
 Grey forces like a thin miasma creep
 Stealing through chinks in his closed mansion's doors,
 Discolouring the walls of upper mind
 In which he lives his fair and specious life,
 And leave behind a stench of sin and death:
 Not only rise in him perverse drifts of thought
 And formidable formless influences,
 But there come presences and awful shapes:
 Tremendous forms and faces mount dim steps
 And stare at times into his living-rooms,
 Or called up for a moment's passionate work
 Lay a dire custom's claim upon his heart:
 Aroused from sleep, they can be bound no more.
 Afflicting the daylight and alarming night,
 Invading at will his outer tenement
 The stark gloom's grisly dire inhabitants
 Mounting into God's light all light perturb.
 All they have touched or seen they make their own,
 In Nature's basement lodge, mind's passages fill,
 Disrupt thought's links and musing sequences,
 Break through the soul's stillness with a noise and cry
 Or they call the inhabitants of the abyss,
 Invite the instincts to forbidden joys,
 A laughter wake of dread demoniac mirth
 And with nether riot and revel shake life's floor.
 Impotent to quell his terrible prisoners
 Appalled the householder helpless sits above,
 Taken from him his house is his no more.
 He is bound and forced, a victim of the play,
 Or, allured, joys in the mad and mighty din.
 His nature's dangerous forces have arisen
 And hold at will a rebel's holiday.
 Aroused from the darkness where they crouched in the depths,
 Prisoned from the sight, they can be held no more;

BOOK VII CANTO II

His nature's impulses are now his lords.
 Once quelled or wearing specious names and vests
 Infernal elements, demon powers are there.
 Man's lower nature hides these awful guests.
 Their vast contagion grips sometimes man's world.
 An awful insurgence overpowers man's soul.
 In house and house the huge uprising grows;
 Hell's companies are loosed to do their work,
 Into the earth-ways they break out from all doors,
 Invade with blood-lust and the will to slay
 And fill with horror and carnage God's fair world.
 Death and his hunters stop a victim earth;
 The terrible Angel smites at every door:
 An awful laughter mocks at the world's pain
 And massacre and torture grin at Heaven:
 All is the prey of the destroying force;
 Creation rocks and tremble top and base.
 This evil Nature housed in human hearts
 A foreign inhabitant, a dangerous guest:
 The soul that harbours it it can dislodge,
 Expel the householder, possess the house.
 An opposite potency contradicting God,
 A momentary Evil's almightiness
 Has straddled the straight path of Nature's acts.
 It imitates the Godhead it denies,
 Puts on his figure and assumes his face.
 A Manichean creator and destroyer,
 This can abolish man, annul his world.
 But there is a guardian power, there are Hands that save,
 Calm eyes divine regard the human scene.
 All the world's possibilities in man
 Are waiting as the tree waits in its seed:
 His past lives in him; it drives his future's pace;
 His present's acts fashion his coming fate.
 The unborn gods hide in his house of Life.
 The daemons of the unknown overshadow his mind
 Casting their dreams into live moulds of thought,
 The moulds in which his mind builds out its world.
 His mind creates around him its universe.
 All that has been renews in him its birth,

SAVITRI

All that can be is figured in his soul.
 Issuing in deeds it scores on the roads of the world,
 Obscure to the interpreting reason's guess,
 Lines of the secret purpose of the gods.
 In strange directions runs the intricate plan;
 Held back from human foresight is their end.
 And the far intention of some ordering Will
 Or the order of life's arbitrary Chance
 Finds out its settled poise and fated hour.
 Our surface watched in vain by reason's gaze,
 Invaded by the impromptus of the unseen,
 Helpless records the accidents of Time,
 The involuntary turns and leaps of life.
 Only a little of us foresees its steps,
 Only a little has will and purposed pace.
 A vast subliminal is man's measureless part.
 The dim subconscious is his cavern base.
 Abolished vainly in the walks of Time
 Our past lives still in our unconscious selves
 And by the weight of its hidden influences
 Is shaped our future's self-discovery.
 Thus all is an inevitable chain
 And yet a series seems of accidents.
 The unremembering hours repeat the old acts,
 Our dead past round our future's ankles clings
 And drags back the new nature's glorious stride,
 Or from its buried corpse old ghosts arise,
 Old thoughts, old longings, dead passions live again,
 Recur in sleep or move the waking man
 To words that force the barrier of the lips,
 To deeds that suddenly start and o'erleap
 His head of reason and his guardian will.
 An old self lurks in the new self we are;
 Hardly we escape from what we once had been:
 In the dim gleam of habit's passages,
 In the subconscious's darkling corridors
 All things are carried by the porter nerves
 And nothing checked by subterranean mind,
 Unstudied by the guardians of the doors,
 And passed by a blind instinctive memory,

BOOK VII CANTO II

The old gang dismissed, old cancelled passports serve,
Nothing is wholly dead that once had lived.

In dim tunnels of the world's being and in ours

The old rejected nature still survives;

The corpses of its slain thoughts raise their heads

And visit mind's nocturnal walks in sleep,

Its stifled impulses breathe and move and rise;

All keeps a phantom immortality.

Irresistible are Nature's sequences:

The seeds of sins renounced sprout from hid soil;

The evil cast from our hearts once more we face.

Our dead selves come to slay our living soul.

A portion of us lives in present Time,

A secret mass in dim inconscience gropes;

Out of the inconscient and subliminal

Arisen, we live in mind's uncertain light

And strive to know and master a dubious world

Whose purpose and meaning are hidden from our sight.

Above us dwells a superconscient god

Hidden in the mystery of his own light:

Around us is a vast of ignorance

Lit by the uncertain ray of human mind,

Below us sleeps the Inconscient dark and mute.

But this is only Matter's first self-view,

A scale and series in the Ignorance.

This is not all we are or all our world.

Our greater self of knowledge waits for us,

A supreme light in the truth-conscious Vast:

It sees from summits beyond thinking mind,

It moves in a splendid air transcending life.

It shall descend and make earth's life divine.

Truth made the world, not a blind Nature-Force.

For here are not our large diviner heights;

Our summits in the superconscient's blaze

Are glorious with the very face of God:

There is our aspect of eternity,

There is the figure of the god we are,

His young unaging look on deathless things,

His joy in our escape from death and Time,

His immortality and light and bliss.

SAVITRI

Our larger being sits behind cryptic walls:
 There are greatnesses hidden in our unseen parts
 That wait their hour to step into life's front:
 We feel an aid from deep indwelling Gods:
 One speaks within, Light comes to us from above.
 Our soul from its mysterious chamber acts;
 Its influence pressing on our heart and mind
 Pushes them to exceed their mortal selves.
 It seeks for Good and Beauty and for God;
 We see beyond self's walls our limitless self,
 We gaze through our world's glass at half-seeing vasts,
 We hunt for the Truth behind apparent things.
 Our inner Mind dwells in a larger light,
 Its brightness looks at us through hidden doors;
 Our members luminous grow and Wisdom's face
 Appears in the doorway of the mystic ward:
 When she enters into our house of outward sense,
 Then we look up and see, above, her sun.
 A mighty life-self with its inner powers
 Supports the dwarfish modicum we call life;
 It can graft upon our crawl two puissant wings.
 Our body's subtle self is throned within
 In its viewless palace of veridical dreams
 That are bright shadows of the thoughts of God.
 In the prone obscure beginnings of the race
 The human grew in the bowed apelike man.
 He stood erect, a Godlike form and force
 And a soul's thoughts looked out from earthborn eyes;
 Man stood erect, he wore the thinker's brow:
 He looked at heaven and saw his comrade stars;
 A vision came of beauty and greater birth
 Slowly emerging from the heart's chapel of light
 And moved in a white lucent air of dreams.
 He saw his being's unrealised vastnesses,
 He aspired and housed the nascent demi-god.
 Out of the dim recesses of the self
 The occult seeker into the open came:
 He heard the far and touched the intangible,
 He gazed into the future and the unseen;
 He used the powers earth-instruments cannot use,

BOOK VII CANTO II

A pastime made of the impossible;
 He caught up fragments of the Omniscient's thought,
 He scattered formulas of omnipotence.
 Thus man in his little house made of earth's dust
 Grew towards an unseen heaven of thought and dream
 Looking into the vast vistas of his mind
 On a small globe dotting infinity.
 At last climbing a long and narrow stair
 He stood alone on a high roof of things
 And saw the light of a spiritual sun.
 Aspiring he transcends his earthly self;
 He stands in the largeness of his soul new-born
 Redeemed from encirclement by mortal things
 And moves in a pure free spiritual realm
 As in the rare breath of a stratosphere.
 A lost end of far lines of divinity,
 He mounts by a frail thread to his high source;
 He reaches his fount of immortality,
 He calls the Godhead into his mortal life.
 All this the spirit concealed had done in her:
 A portion of the mighty Mother came
 Into her as into its own human part:
 Amid the cosmic workings of the Gods
 It marked her the centre of a wide-drawn scheme,
 Dreamed in the passion of her far-seeing spirit
 To mould humanity into God's own shape
 And lead this great blind struggling world to light
 Or a new world discover or create.
 Earth must transform herself and equal Heaven
 Or Heaven descend into earth's mortal state.
 But for such vast spiritual change to be,
 Out of the mystic cavern in man's heart
 The heavenly Psyche must put off her veil
 And step into common nature's crowded rooms
 And stand uncovered in that nature's front
 And rule its thoughts and fill the body and life.
 Obedient to a high command she sat:
 Time, life and death were passing incidents
 Obstructing with their transient view her sight,
 Her sight that must break through and liberate the god

SAVITRI

Imprisoned in the visionless mortal man.
The inferior nature born into ignorance
Still took too large a place, it veiled her self
And must be pushed aside to find her soul.

CANTO THREE

THE ENTRY INTO THE INNER COUNTRIES

AT first out of the busy hum of mind
 As if from a loud thronged market into a cave
 By an inward moment's magic she had come,
 A stark hushed emptiness became her self:
 Her mind unvisited by the voice of thought
 Stared at a void deep's dumb infinity.
 Her heights receded, her depths behind her closed;
 All fled away from her and left her blank.
 But when she came back to her self of thought,
 Once more she was a human thing on earth,
 A lump of Matter, a house of closed sight,
 A mind compelled to think out ignorance,
 A life-force pressed into a camp of works
 And the material world her limiting field.
 Amazed like one unknowing she sought her way
 Out of the tangle of man's ignorant past
 That took the surface person for the soul.
 Then a Voice spoke that dwelt on secret heights:
 "For man thou seekst, not for thyself alone.
 Only if God assumes the human mind
 And puts on mortal ignorance for his cloak
 And makes himself the Dwarf with triple stride,
 Can he help man to grow into the God.
 As man disguised the cosmic Greatness works
 And finds the mystic inaccessible gate
 And opens the Immortal's golden door.
 Man human follows in God's human steps.
 Accepting his darkness thou must bring to him light,
 Accepting his sorrow thou must bring to him bliss.
 In Matter's body find thy heaven-born soul."

SAVITRI

Then Savitri surged out of her body's wall
 And stood a little span outside herself
 And looked into her subtle being's depths
 And in its heart as in a lotus-bud
 Divined her secret and mysterious soul.
 At the dim portal of the inner life
 That bars out from our depths the body's mind
 And all that lives but by the body's breath,
 She knocked and pressed against the ebony gate.
 The living portal groaned with sullen hinge:
 Heavily reluctant it complained inert
 Against the tyranny of the spirit's touch.
 A formidable voice cried from within:
 "Back, creature of earth, lest tortured and torn thou die."
 A dreadful murmur rose like a dim sea;
 The Serpent of the threshold hissing rose,
 A fatal guardian hood with monstrous coils,
 The hounds of darkness growled with jaws agape,
 And trolls and gnomes and goblins scowled and stared
 And wild beast roarings thrilled the blood with fear
 And menace muttered in a dangerous tongue.
 Unshaken her will pressed on the rigid bars:
 The gate swung wide with a protesting jar,
 The opponent Powers withdrew their dreadful guard;
 Her being entered into the inner worlds.
 In a narrow passage, the subconscious's gate,
 She breathed with difficulty and pain and strove
 To find the inner self concealed in sense.
 Into a dense of subtle Matter packed,
 A cavity filled with a blind mass of power,
 An opposition of misleading gleams,
 A heavy barrier of unseeing sight,
 She forced her way through body to the soul.
 Across a perilous border line she passed
 Where life dips into the subconscious dusk
 Or struggles from Matter into chaos of mind,
 Aswarm with elemental entities
 And fluttering shapes of vague half-bodied thought
 And crude beginnings of incontinent force.
 At first a difficult narrowness was there,

BOOK VII CANTO III

A press of uncertain powers and drifting wills;
 For all was there but nothing in its place.
 At times an opening came, a door was forced;
 She crossed through spaces of a secret self
 And trod in passages of inner Time.
 At last she broke into a form of things,
 A start of finiteness, a world of sense:
 But all was still confused, nothing self-found.
 Soul was not there but only cries of life.
 A thronged and clamorous air environed her.
 A horde of sounds defied significance,
 A dissonant clash of cries and contrary calls;
 A mob of visions broke across the sight,
 A jostled sequence lacking sense and suite,
 Feelings pushed through a packed and burdened heart,
 Each forced its separate inconsequent way
 But cared for nothing but its ego's drive.
 A rally without key of common will,
 Thought stared at thought and pulled at the taut brain
 As if to pluck the reason from its seat
 And cast its corpse into life's wayside drain;
 So might forgotten lie in Nature's mud
 Abandoned the slain sentinel of the soul.
 So could life's power shake from it mind's rule,
 Nature renounce the spirit's government
 And the bare elemental energies
 Make of the sense a glory of boundless joy,
 A splendour of ecstatic anarchy,
 A revel mighty and mad of utter bliss.
 This was the sense's instinct void of soul
 Or when the soul sleeps hidden void of power,
 But now the vital godhead wakes within
 And lifts the life with the supernal's touch.
 But how shall come the glory and the flame
 If mind is cast away into the abyss?
 For body without mind has not the light,
 The rapture of spirit sense, the joy of life;
 All then becomes subconscious, tenebrous,
 Inconscience puts its seal on Nature's page
 Or else a mad disorder whirls the brain

SAVITRI

Posting along a ravaged nature's roads,
 A chaos of disordered impulses
 In which no light can come, no joy, no peace.
 This state now threatened, this she pushed from her.
 As if in a long endless tossing street
 One driven mid a trampling hurrying crowd
 Hour after hour she trod without release,
 Holding by her will the senseless meute at bay;
 Out of the dreadful press she dragged her will
 And fixed her thought upon the saviour Name;
 Then all grew still and empty; she was free.
 A large deliverance came, a vast calm space.
 Awhile she moved through a blank tranquillity
 Of naked Light from an invisible sun,
 A void that was a bodiless happiness,
 A blissful vacuum of nameless peace.
 But now a mightier danger's front drew near:
 The press of bodily mind, the Inconscient's brood
 Of aimless thought and will had fallen from her.
 Approaching loomed a giant head of Life
 Ungoverned by mind or soul, subconscious, vast.
 It tossed all power into a single drive,
 It made its power a might of dangerous seas.
 Into the stillness of her silent self,
 Into the whiteness of its muse of Space
 A spate, a torrent of the speed of Life
 Broke like a wind-lashed driven mob of waves
 Racing on a pale floor of summer sand;
 It drowned its banks, a mountain of climbing waves.
 Enormous was its vast and passionate voice.
 It cried to her listening spirit as it ran,
 Demanding God's submission to chainless Force.
 A deaf force calling to a status dumb,
 A thousand voices in a muted Vast,
 It claimed the heart's support for its clutch at joy,
 For its need to act the witness soul's consent,
 For its lust of power her neutral being's seal.
 Into the wideness of her watching self
 It brought a grandiose gust of the Breath of Life;
 Its torrent carried the world's hopes and fears,

BOOK VII CANTO III

All life's, all Nature's dissatisfied hungry cry,
 And the longing all eternity cannot fill:
 It called to the mountain secrecies of the soul
 And the miracle of the never-dying fire,
 It spoke to some first inexpressible ecstasy
 Hidden in the creative beat of Life;
 Out of the nether unseen deeps it tore
 Its lure and magic of disordered bliss,
 Into earth-light poured its maze of tangled charm
 And heady draught of Nature's primitive joy
 And the fire and mystery of forbidden delight
 Drunk from the world-libido's bottomless well,
 And the honey-sweet poison-wine of lust and death,
 But dreamed a vintage of glory of life's gods,
 And felt as celestial rapture's golden sting.
 The cycles of the infinity of desire
 And the mystique that made an unrealised world
 Wider than the known and closer than the unknown
 In which hunt for ever the hounds of mind and life,
 Tempted a deep dissatisfied urge within
 To long for the unfulfilled and ever far
 And make this life upon a limiting earth
 A climb towards summits vanishing in the void,
 A search for the glory of the impossible.
 It dreamed of that which never has been known,
 It grasped at that which never has been won,
 It chased into an Elysian memory
 The charms that flee from the heart's soon lost delight;
 It dared the force that slays, the joys that hurt,
 The imaged shape of unaccomplished things
 And the summons to a Circean transmuting dance
 And passion's tenancy of the courts of love
 And the wild Beast's ramp and romp with Beauty and Life.
 It brought its cry and surge of opposite powers,
 Its moments of the touch of luminous planes,
 Its flame-ascensions and sky-pitched vast attempts,
 Its fiery towers of dream built on the winds,
 Its sinkings towards the darkness and the abyss,
 Its honey of tenderness, its sharp wine of hate,
 Its changes of sun and cloud, of laughter and tears,

SAVITRI

Its bottomless danger pits and swallowing gulfs,
 Its fear and joy and ecstasy and despair,
 Its occult wizardries, its simple lines
 And great communions and uplifting moves,
 Its faith in heaven, its intercourse with hell.
 These powers were not blunt with the dead weight of earth,
 They gave ambrosia's taste and poison's sting.
 There was an ardour in the gaze of Life
 That saw heaven blue in the grey air of Night:
 The impulses godward soared on passion's wings.
 Mind's quick-paced thoughts floated from their high necks
 A glowing splendour as of an irised mane,
 A parure of pure intuition's light;
 Its flame-foot gallop they could imitate:
 Mind's voices mimicked inspiration's stress,
 Its ictus of infallibility,
 Its speed and lightning heaven-leap of the Gods.
 A trenchant blade that shore the nets of doubt,
 Its sword of discernment seemed almost divine.
 Yet all that knowledge was a borrowed sun's;
 The forms that came were not heaven's native births:
 Its puissance dangerous and absolute
 Could mingle poison with the wine of God.
 On these high shining backs falsehood could ride;
 Truth lay with delight in error's passionate arms
 Gliding downstream in a blithe gilded barge:
 She edged her ray with a magnificent lie.
 Here in Life's nether realms all contraries meet;
 Truth stares and does her works with bandaged eyes,
 And Ignorance is Wisdom's patron here.
 Those galloping hooves in their enthusiast speed
 Could bear to a dangerous intermediate zone
 Where Death walks wearing a robe of deathless Life.
 Or they enter the valley of the wandering Gleam
 Whence, captives or victims of the specious Ray,
 Souls trapped in that region never can escape.
 Agents, not masters, they serve Life's desires
 Toiling for ever in the snare of Time.
 Their bodies born out of some Nihil's womb
 Ensnare the spirit in the moment's dreams,

BOOK VII CANTO III

Then perish vomiting the immortal soul
 Out of Matter's belly into the sink of Nought.
 Yet some uncaught, unslain can warily pass
 Carrying Truth's image in their sheltered heart,
 Pluck Knowledge out of error's screening grip,
 Break paths through the blind walls of little self,
 Then travel on to reach a greater life.
 All this streamed past her and seemed to her vision's sight
 As if around a high and voiceless isle
 A clamour of waters from far unknown hills,
 Swallowed its narrow banks in crowding waves
 And made a hungry world of white wild foam:
 Hastening, a dragon with a million feet,
 Its foam and cry, a drunken giant's din,
 Tossing a mane of Darkness into God's sky,
 It ebbd receding into a distant roar;
 Then smiled again a large and tranquil air:
 Blue heaven, green earth, partners of Beauty's reign,
 Lived as of old, companions in happiness;
 And in the world's heart laughed the joy of life.
 All now was still, the soil shone dry and pure.
 Through it all she moved not, plunged not in the vain waves.
 Out of the vastness of the silent self
 Life's clamour fled; her spirit was mute and free.

Then journeying forward through the self's wide hush
 She came into a brilliant ordered Space.
 There Life dwelt parked in an armed tranquillity;
 A chain was on her strong insurgent heart.
 Tamed to the modesty of a measured pace,
 She kept no more her vehement stride and rush;
 She had lost the careless majesty of her muse
 And the ample grandeur of her regal force;
 Curbed were her mighty pomps, her splendid waste,
 Sobered the revels of her bacchant play,
 Cut down were her squanderings in desire's bazaar,
 Coerced her despot will, her fancy's dance,
 A cold stolidity bound the riot of sense.
 Her spirit's bounds they cast in rigid lines.
 A royalty without freedom was her lot;

SAVITRI

The sovereign throned obeyed her ministers:
 Her servants mind and sense governed her house
 And guarded with a phalanx of armoured rules
 The reason's balanced reign, kept order and peace.
 Her will lived closed in adamant walls of law,
 Coerced was her force by chains that feigned to adorn,
 Imagination was prisoned in a fort,
 Her wanton and licentious favourite;
 Reality's poise and reason's symmetry
 Were set in its place sentinelled by marshalled facts,
 They gave to the soul for throne a bench of Law,
 For kingdom a small world of rule and line:
 The ages' wisdom, shrivelled to scholast lines,
 Shrank patterned into a copy-book device.
 The Spirit's almighty freedom was not here:
 A schoolman mind had captured life's large space,
 But chose to live in bare and paltry rooms
 Parked off from the too vast dangerous universe,
 Fearing to lose its soul in the infinite.
 Even the Idea's ample sweep was cut
 Into a system, chained to fixed pillars of thought
 Or rivetted to Matter's solid ground:
 Or else the soul was lost in its own heights:
 Obeying the Ideal's highbrowed law
 Thought based a throne on unsubstantial air
 Disdaining earth's flat triviality:
 It barred reality out to live in its dreams.
 Or all stepped into a systemed universe:
 Life's empire was a managed continent,
 Its thoughts an army ranked and disciplined;
 Uniformed they kept the logic of their fixed place
 At the bidding of the trained centurion mind.
 Or each stepped into its station like a star
 Or marched through fixed and constellated heavens
 Or kept its feudal rank among its peers
 In the sky's unchanging cosmic hierarchy.
 Or like a highbred maiden with chaste eyes
 Forbidden to walk unveiled the public ways,
 She must in close secluded chambers move,
 Her feeling in cloisters live or gardened paths.

BOOK VII CANTO III

Life was consigned to a safe level path,
 It dared not tempt the great and difficult heights
 Or climb to be neighbour to a lonely star
 Or skirt the danger of the precipice
 Or tempt the foam-curled breakers' perilous laugh,
 Adventure's lyrist, danger's amateur,
 Or into her chamber call some flaming god,
 Or leave the world's bounds and where no limits are,
 Meet with the heart's passion the Adorable
 Or set the world ablaze with the inner Fire.
 A chastened epithet in the prose of life,
 She must fill with colour just her sanctioned space,
 Not break out of the cabin of the idea
 Nor trespass into rhythms too high or vast.
 Even when it soared into ideal air,
 Thought's flight lost not itself in heaven's blue:
 It drew upon the skies a patterned flower
 Of disciplined beauty and harmonic light.
 A temperate vigilant spirit governed life:
 Its acts were tools of the considering thought,
 Too cold to take fire and set the world ablaze,
 Or the careful reason's diplomatic moves
 Testing the means to a prefigured end,
 Or at the highest pitch some calm Will's plan
 Or a strategy of some High Command within
 To conquer the secret treasures of the gods
 Or win for a masked king some glorious world,
 Not a reflex of the spontaneous self,
 An index of the being and its moods,
 A winging of conscious spirit, a sacrament
 Of life's communion with the still Supreme
 Or its pure movement on the Eternal's road.
 Or else for the body of some high Idea
 A house was built with too close-fitting bricks;
 Action and thought cemented made a wall
 Of small ideals limiting the soul.
 Even meditation mused on a narrow seat;
 And worship turned to an exclusive God,
 To the Universal in a chapel prayed
 Whose doors were shut against the universe:

SAVITRI

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 Of small ideals limiting the soul.
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 And worship turned to an exclusive God,
 To the Universal in a chapel prayed
 Whose doors were shut against the universe:

SAVITRI

Or kneeled to the bodiless Impersonal
 A mind shut to the cry and fire of love:
 A rational religion dried the heart.
 It planned a smooth life's acts with ethics' rule
 Or offered a cold and flameless sacrifice.
 The sacred Book lay on its sanctified desk
 Wrapped in interpretation's silken strings:
 A credo sealed up its spiritual sense.

[Here was a quiet country of fixed mind,
 Here life no more was all nor passion's voice;
 A cry of sense had sunk into a hush.
 Soul was not there nor spirit, but mind alone;
 Mind claimed to be the spirit and the soul.
 The spirit saw itself as form of mind,
 Lost itself in the glory of the thought,
 A light that made invisible the sun.
 Into a firm and settled space she came
 Where all was still and all things kept their place.
 Each found what it had sought and knew its aim.
 All had a final last stability.]*

There one stood forth who bore authority
 On an important brow and held a rod;
 Command was incarnate in his gesture and tone;
 Tradition's petrified wisdom carved his speech,
 His sentences savoured the oracle.

"Traveller or pilgrim of the inner world,
 Fortunate art thou to reach our brilliant air
 Flaming with thought's supreme finality.
 O aspirant to the perfect way of life,
 Here find it; rest from search and live at peace.
 Ours is the home of cosmic certainty.
 Here is the truth, God's harmony is here.

*Another version:

This narrowed life's pedestrian thought and will
 Debouched into a little continent space
 Where soul was not and thinking mind
 Laboured content with small finalities.
 It seemed to it the top of being's arc
 And the last circle of the quest of life.
 It was a paradise for thoughts' crowned ease
 Where nothing more was left to find or know,
 A tabernacle of wise contented life.

BOOK VII CANTO III

Register thy name in the book of the elite,
 Admitted by the sanction of the few,
 Adopt thy station of knowledge, thy post in mind,
 Thy ticket of order draw in Life's bureau
 And praise thy fate that made thee one of ours.
 All here, docketed and tied, the mind can know,
 All schemed by law that God permits to life.
 This is the end and there is no beyond.
 Here is the safety of the ultimate wall,
 Here is the clarity of the sword of Light,
 Here is the victory of a single Truth,
 Here burns the diamond of flawless bliss.
 A favourite of Heaven and Nature live."
 But to the too satisfied and confident sage
 Savitri replied casting into his world
 Sight's deep release, the heart's questioning inner voice.
 For here the heart spoke not, only clear daylight
 Of intellect reigned here, limiting, cold, precise.
 "Happy are they who in this chaos of things,
 This coming and going of the feet of Time,
 Can find the single Truth, the eternal Law:
 Untouched they live by hope and doubt and fear.
 Happy are men anchored on fixed belief
 In this uncertain and ambiguous world,
 Or who have planted in the heart's rich soil
 One small grain of spiritual certitude.
 Happiest who stand on faith as on a rock.
 But I must pass leaving the ended search,
 Truth's rounded outcome firm, immutable
 And this harmonic building of world-fact,
 This ordered knowledge of apparent things.
 Here I can stay not, for I seek my soul."
 None answered in that bright contented world,
 Or only turned on their accustomed way
 Astonished to hear questioning in that air
 Or thoughts that could still turn to the Beyond.
 But some murmured, passers-by from kindred spheres:
 Each by his credo judged the thought she spoke.
 "Who then is this who knows not that the soul
 Is a least gland or a secretion's fault

SAVITRI

Disquieting the sane government of the mind,
 Disordering the function of the brain,
 Or a yearning lodged in Nature's mortal house
 Or dream whispered in man's cave of hollow thought
 Who would prolong his brief unhappy term
 Or cling to living in a sea of death?"
 But others, "Nay, it is her spirit she seeks.
 A splendid shadow of the name of God,
 A formless lustre from the Ideal's realm,
 The Spirit is the Holy Ghost of Mind;
 But none has touched its limits or seen its face,
 Each soul is the great Father's crucified Son,
 Mind is that soul's one parent, its conscious cause,
 The ground on which trembles a brief passing light,
 Mind, sole creator of the apparent world.
 All that is here is part of our own self;
 Our minds have made the world in which we live."
 Another with mystic and unsatisfied eyes
 Who loved his slain belief and mourned its death:
 "Is there one left who seeks for a Beyond?
 Can still the path be found, opened the gate?"

So she fared on across her silent self.
 To a road she came thronged with an ardent crowd
 Who sped brilliant fire-footed, sun-light eyed,
 Pressing to reach the world's mysterious wall,
 And pass through masked doorways into outer mind
 Where the Light comes not nor the mystic voice,
 Messengers from our subliminal greatneses,
 Guests from the cavern of the secret soul.
 Into dim spiritual somnolence they break
 Or shed wide wonder on our waking self,
 Ideas that haunt us with their radiant tread,
 Dreams that are hints of unborn Reality,
 Strange goddesses with deep-pooled magical eyes,
 Strong wind-haired gods carrying harps of hope,
 Great moon-hued visions gliding through gold air,
 Aspiration's sun-dream head and star-carved limbs,
 Emotions making common hearts sublime.
 And Savitri mingling in that glorious crowd,

BOOK VII CANTO III

Yearning to the spiritual light they bore,
 Longed once to hasten like them to save God's world;
 But she reined back the high passion in her heart:
 She knew that first she must discover her soul.
 Only who save themselves can others save.
 In contrary sense she faced life's riddling truth;
 They carrying the light to suffering men
 Hurried with eager feet to the outer world;
 Her eyes were turned towards the eternal source.
 Outstretching her hands to stay the throng she cried:
 "O happy company of luminous gods,
 Reveal, who know, the road that I must tread,—
 For surely that bright quarter is your home,—
 To find the birthplace of the occult Fire
 And the deep mansion of my secret soul."
 One answered pointing to a silence dim
 On a remote extremity of sleep
 In some far background of the inner world.
 "O Savitri, from thy hidden soul we come.
 We are the messengers, the occult gods
 Who help men's drab and heavy ignorant lives
 To wake to beauty and the wonder of things
 Touching them with glory and divinity;
 In evil we light the deathless flame of good
 And hold the torch of knowledge on ignorant roads;
 We are thy will and all men's will towards Light.
 O human copy and disguise of God
 Who seekst the deity thou keepest hid
 And livest by the Truth thou hast not known,
 Follow the world's winding highway to its source.
 There in the silence few have ever reached,
 Thou shalt see the Fire burning on the bare stone
 And the deep cavern of thy secret soul."
 Then Savitri following the great winding road
 Came where it dwindled into a narrow path
 Trod only by rare wounded pilgrim-feet.
 A few bright forms emerged from unknown depths
 And looked at her with calm immortal eyes.
 There was no sound to break the brooding hush;
 One felt the silent nearness of the soul.

CANTO FOUR

THE TRIPLE SOUL-FORCES

HERE from a low and prone and listless ground
 The passion of the first ascent began;
 A moon-bright face in a sombre cloud of hair,
 A Woman sat in a pale lustrous robe.
 A rugged and ragged soil was her bare seat,
 Beneath her feet a sharp and wounding stone.
 A divine pity on the peaks of the world,
 A spirit touched by the grief of all that lives,
 She looked out far and saw from inner mind
 This questionable world of outward things,
 Of false appearances and plausible shapes,
 This dubious cosmos stretched in the ignorant Void,
 The pangs of earth, the toil and speed of the stars
 And the difficult birth and dolorous end of life.
 Accepting the universe as her body of woe,
 The Mother of the seven sorrows bore
 The seven stabs that pierced her bleeding heart:
 The beauty of sadness lingered on her face,
 Her eyes were dim with the ancient stain of tears.
 Her heart was riven with the world's agony
 And burdened with the sorrow and struggle in Time,
 An anguished music trailed in her rapt voice.
 Absorbed in a deep compassion's ecstasy,
 Lifting the mild ray of her patient gaze,
 In soft sweet training words slowly she spoke:
 "O Savitri, I am thy secret soul.
 To share the suffering of the world I came,
 I draw my children's pangs into my breast.
 I am the nurse of the dolour beneath the stars;
 I am the soul of all who wailing writhe

BOOK VII CANTO IV

Under the ruthless harrow of the Gods.
 I am woman, nurse and slave and beaten beast;
 I tend the hands that gave me cruel blows;
 The hearts that spurned my love and zeal I serve;
 I am the courted queen, the pampered doll,
 I am the giver of the bowl of rice,
 I am the worshipped Angel of the House.
 I am in all that suffers and that cries.
 Mine is the prayer that climbs in vain from earth,
 I am traversed by my creatures' agonies,
 I am the spirit in a world of pain.
 The scream of tortured flesh and tortured hearts
 Fall'n back on heart and flesh unheard by Heaven
 Has rent with helpless grief and wrath my soul.
 I have seen the peasant burning in his hut,
 I have seen the slashed corpse of the slaughtered child,
 Heard woman's cry ravished and stripped and haled
 Amid the bayings of the hell-hound mob,
 I have looked on, I had no power to save.
 I have brought no arm of strength to aid or slay;
 God gave me love, he gave me not his force.
 I have shared the toil of the yoked animal drudge
 Pushed by the goad, encouraged by the whip;
 I have shared the fear-filled life of bird and beast,
 Its long hunt for the day's precarious food,
 Its covert slink and crouch and hungry prowl,
 Its pain and terror seized by beak and claw.
 I have shared the daily life of common men,
 Its petty pleasures and its petty cares,
 Its press of troubles and haggard horde of ills,
 Earth's trail of sorrow hopeless of relief,
 The unwanted tedious labour without joy,
 And the burden of misery and the strokes of fate.
 I have been pity, leaning over pain
 And the tender smile that heals the wounded heart
 And sympathy making life less hard to bear.
 Man has felt near my unseen face and hands;
 I have become the sufferer and his moan,
 I have lain down with the mangled and the slain,
 I have lived with the prisoner in his dungeon cell,

SAVITRI

Heavy on my shoulders weighs the yoke of Time:
 Nothing refusing of creation's load,
 I have borne all and know I still must bear:
 Perhaps when the world sinks into a last sleep,
 I too may sleep in dumb eternal peace.
 I have borne the calm indifference of Heaven,
 Watched Nature's cruelty to suffering things
 While God passed silent by nor turned to help.
 Yet have I cried not out against his will,
 Yet have I not accused his cosmic Law.
 Only to change this great hard world of pain
 A patient prayer has risen from my breast;
 A pallid resignation lights my brow,
 Within me a blind faith and mercy dwell;
 I carry the fire that never can be quenched
 And the compassion that supports the suns.
 I am the hope that looks towards my God,
 My God who never came to me till now;
 His voice I hear that ever says 'I come':
 I know that one day he shall come at last."
 She ceased, and like an echo from below
 Answering her pathos of divine complaint
 A voice of wrath took up the dire refrain,
 A growl of thunder or roar of angry beast,
 The beast that crouching growls within man's depths,—
 Voice of a tortured Titan once a God.
 "I am the Man of Sorrows, I am he
 Who is nailed on the wide cross of the universe;
 To enjoy my agony God built the earth,
 My passion he has made his drama's theme.
 He has sent me naked into his bitter world
 And beaten me with his rods of grief and pain
 That I might cry and grovel at his feet
 And offer him worship with my blood and tears.
 I am Prometheus under the vulture's beak,
 Man, the discoverer of the undying Fire,
 In the flame he kindled burning like a moth;
 I am the seeker who can never find,
 I am the fighter who can never win,
 I am the runner who never touched his goal;

BOOK VII CANTO IV

Hell tortures me with the edges of my thought,
 Heaven tortures me with the splendour of my dreams.
 What profit have I of my human soul?
 I toil like the animal, like the animal die.
 I am man the rebel, man the helpless serf;
 Fate and my fellows cheat me of my wage.
 I loosen with my blood my servitude's seal
 And shake from my aching neck the oppressor's knees
 Only to seat new tyrants on my back:
 My teachers lesson me in slavery,
 I am shown God's stamp and my own true signature
 Upon the sorry contract of my fate.
 I have loved, but none has loved me since my birth;
 My fruit of works is given to other hands:
 All that is left me is my evil thoughts,
 My sordid quarrel against God and man,
 Envy of the riches that I cannot share,
 Hate of a happiness that is not mine.
 I know my fate will ever be the same,
 It is my Nature's work that cannot change:
 I have loved for mine, not for the beloved's sake,
 I have loved for myself and not for others' lives.
 Each in himself is sole by Nature's law,
 So God has made his harsh and dreadful world,
 So has he built the petty heart of man;
 Only by force and ruse can man survive:
 For pity is a weakness in his breast,
 His goodness is a laxity in the nerves,
 His kindness an investment for return,
 His altruism is ego's other face:
 He serves the world that him the world may serve.
 If once the Titan's strength could wake in me,
 If Enceladus from Etna could arise,
 I then would reign the master of the world
 And like a God enjoy man's bliss and pain.
 But God has taken from me the ancient force.
 There is a dull consent in my sluggish heart,
 A fierce satisfaction with my special pangs
 As if they made me taller than my kind;
 Only by suffering can I excel.

SAVITRI

I am the victim of titanic ills,
 I am the doer of demoniac deeds;
 I was made for evil, evil is my lot;
 Evil I must be and by evil live;
 Nought other can I do but be myself;
 What Nature made me, that I must remain.
 I suffer and toil and weep; I moan and hate."
 And Savitri heard the Voice, the echo heard
 And turning to her being of pity spoke:
 "Madonna of suffering, Mother of grief divine,
 Thou art a portion of my soul put forth
 To bear the unbearable sorrow of the world.
 Because thou art, men yield not to their doom.
 But ask for happiness and strive with fate;
 Because thou art, the wretched still can hope.
 But thine is the power to solace, not to save.
 One day I will return, a bringer of strength,
 And make thee drink from the Eternal's cup;
 His streams of force shall triumph in thy limbs
 And Wisdom's calm control thy passionate heart.
 Thy love shall be the bond of human kind,
 Compassion the bright king of Nature's acts:
 Misery shall pass abolished from the earth;
 The world shall be freed from the anger of the Beast,
 From the cruelty of the Titan and his pain.
 There shall be peace and joy for ever more."

On passed she in her spirit's upward route.
 An ardent grandeur climbed mid ferns and rocks,
 A quiet wind flattered the heart to warmth,
 A finer perfume breathed from slender trees.
 All beautiful grew, subtle and high and strange.
 Here on a boulder carved like a huge throne
 A Woman sat in gold and purple sheen,
 Armed with the trident and the thunderbolt,
 Her feet upon a couchant lion's back.
 A formidable smile curved round her lips,
 Heaven-fire laughed in the corners of her eyes;
 Her body a mass of courage and heavenly strength,
 She menaced the triumph of the nether gods.

BOOK VII CANTO IV

A halo of lightnings flamed around her head
 And sovereignty a great cestus zoned her robe
 And majesty and victory sat with her
 Guarding in the wide cosmic battle-field
 Against the flat equality of Death
 And the all-levelling insurgent Night
 The hierarchy of the ordered Powers,
 The high changeless values, the peaked eminences,
 The privileged aristocracy of Truth,
 And in the governing Ideal's sun
 The triumvirate of wisdom, love and bliss
 And the sole autocracy of the absolute Light.
 August on her seat in the inner world of Mind,
 The Mother of Might looked down on passing things,
 Listened to the advancing tread of Time,
 Saw the irresistible wheeling of the suns
 And heard the thunder of the march of God.
 Amid the swaying forces in their strife
 Sovereign was her word of luminous command,
 Her speech like a war-cry rang or a pilgrim chant.
 A charm restoring hope in failing hearts,
 Aspired the harmony of her puissant voice:
 "O Savitri, I am thy secret soul.
 I have come down into the human world
 And the movement watched by an unsleeping Eye
 And the dark contrariety of earth's fate
 And the battle of the bright and sombre Powers.
 I stand upon earth's paths of danger and grief
 And help the unfortunate and save the doomed.
 To the strong I bring the guerdon of their strength,
 To the weak I bring the armour of my force;
 To men who long I carry their coveted joy:
 I am fortune justifying the great and wise
 By the sanction of the plaudits of the crowd,
 Then trampling them with the armed heel of Fate.
 My ear is leaned to the cry of the oppressed,
 I topple down the thrones of tyrant kings:
 A cry comes from proscribed and hunted lives
 Appealing to me against a pitiless world,
 A voice of the forsaken and desolate

SAVITRI

And the lone prisoner in his dungeon cell.
 Men hail in my coming the Almighty's force
 Or praise with thankful tears his saviour Grace.
 I smite the Titan who bestrides the world
 And slay the ogre in his blood-stained den.
 I am Durga, goddess of the proud and strong,
 And Laksmi, queen of the fair and fortunate;
 I wear the face of Kali when I kill,
 I trample the corpses of the demon hordes.
 I am charged by God to do his mighty work,
 Uncaring I serve his will who sent me forth,
 Reckless of peril and earthly consequence.
 I reason not of virtue and of sin
 But do the deed he has put into my heart.
 I fear not for the angry frown of Heaven,
 I flinch not from the red assault of Hell;
 I crush the opposition of the gods,
 Tread down a million goblin obstacles.
 I guide man to the path of the Divine
 And guard him from the red Wolf and the Snake.
 I set in his mortal hand my heavenly sword
 And put on him the breastplate of the gods.
 I break the ignorant pride of human mind
 And lead the thought to the wideness of the Truth;
 I rend man's narrow and successful life
 And force his sorrowful eyes to gaze at the sun
 That he may die to earth and live in his soul.
 I know the goal, I know the secret route:
 I have studied the map of the invisible worlds;
 I am the battle's head, the journey's star.
 But the great obstinate world resists my word,
 And the crookedness and evil in man's heart
 Is stronger than Reason, profounder than the Pit,
 And the malignancy of hostile Powers
 Puts craftily back the clock of destiny
 And mightier seems than the eternal Will.
 The cosmic evil is too deep to unroot:
 The cosmic suffering is too vast to heal.
 A few I guide who pass me towards the Light;
 A few I save, the mass falls back unsaved;

BOOK VII CANTO IV

A few I help, the many strive and fail:
 But my heart I have hardened and I do my work:
 Slowly the Light grows greater in the East,
 Slowly the world progresses on God's road.
 His seal is on my task, it cannot fail:
 I shall hear the silver swing of heaven's gates
 When God comes out to meet the soul of the world."
 She spoke and from the lower human world
 An answer, a warped echo met her speech;
 The voice came through the spaces of the mind
 Of the dwarf-Titan, the deformed chained god
 Who strives to master his nature's rebel stuff
 And make the universe his instrument.
 The Ego of this great world of desire
 Claimed earth and the wide heavens for the use
 Of man, head of the life it shapes on earth,
 Its representative and conscious soul,
 And symbol of evolving light and force
 And vessel of the godhead that must be.
 A thinking animal, Nature's struggling lord
 Has made of her his nurse and tool and slave
 And pays to her as wage and emolument
 Inescapably by a deep law in things
 His heart's grief and his body's death and pain;
 His pains are her means to grow, to see and feel;
 His death assists her immortality.
 A tool and slave of his own slave and tool,
 He praises his free will and his master mind
 And is pushed by her upon her chosen paths;
 Possessor he is possessed and, ruler, ruled,
 Her conscious automaton, her desire's dupe.
 His soul is her guest, a sovereign mute, inert,
 His body her robot, his life her way to live,
 His conscious mind her strong revolted serf.
 The voice rose up and smote some inner sun:
 "I am the heir of the forces of the earth,
 Slowly I make good my right to my estate;
 A growing godhead in her divinised mud,
 I climb, a claimant to the throne of heaven.
 The last born of the earth I stand the first;

SAVITRI

Her slow millenniums waited for my birth.
 Although I live in Time besieged by Death,
 Precarious owner of my body and soul
 Housed on a little speck amid the stars,
 For me and my use the universe was made.
 Immortal spirit in the perishing clay,
 I am God still unevolved in human form;
 Even if he is not, he becomes in me.
 The sun and moon are lights upon my path;
 Air was invented for my lungs to breathe,
 Conditioned as a wide and wallless space
 For my winged chariot's wheels to cleave a road,
 The sea was made for me to swim and sail
 And bear my golden commerce on its back:
 It laughs cloven by my pleasure's gliding keel,
 I laugh at its black stare of fate and death.
 The earth is my floor, the sky my living's roof.
 All was prepared through many a silent age.
 God made experiments with animal shapes,
 Then only when all was ready I was born.
 I was born weak and small and ignorant,
 A helpless creature in a difficult world,
 Travelling through my brief years with death at my side:
 I have grown greater than Nature, wiser than God.
 I have made real what she never dreamed,
 I have seized her powers and harnessed for my work,
 I have shaped her metals and new metals made;
 I will make glass and raiment out of milk,
 Make iron velvet, water unbreakable stone,
 Like God in his astuce of artist skill,
 Mould from one primal plasm protean forms,
 In single nature multitudinous lives,
 All that imagination can conceive
 In mind intangible, remould anew
 In Matter's plastic solid and concrete;
 No magic can surpass my magic's skill.
 There is no miracle I shall not achieve.
 What God imperfect left, I will complete,
 Out of a tangled mind and half-made soul
 His sin and error I will eliminate;

BOOK VII CANTO IV

What he invented not, I shall invent:
 He was the first creator, I am the last.
 I have found the atoms from which he built the worlds:
 The first tremendous cosmic energy
 Missioned shall leap to slay my enemy kin,
 Expunge a nation or abolish a race,
 Death's silence leave where there was laughter and joy.
 Or the fissured invisible shall spend God's force
 To extend my comforts and expand my wealth,
 To speed my car which now the lightnings drive
 And turn the engines of my miracles.
 I will take his means of sorcery from his hands
 And do with them greater wonders than his best.
 Yet through it all I have kept my balanced thought;
 I have studied my being, I have examined the world,
 I have grown a master of the arts of life.
 I have tamed the wild beast trained to be my friend;
 He guards my house, looks up waiting my will.
 I have taught my kind to serve and to obey.
 I have used the mystery of the cosmic waves
 To see far distance and to hear far words:
 I have conquered Space and knitted close all earth:
 Soon I shall know the secrets of the Mind:
 I play with knowledge and with ignorance
 And sin and virtue my inventions are,
 I can transcend or sovereignly use.
 I shall know mystic truths, seize occult powers.
 I shall slay my enemies with a look or thought,
 I shall sense the unspoken feelings of all hearts
 And see and hear the hidden thoughts of men.
 When earth is mastered, I shall conquer heaven;
 The gods shall be my aids or menial folk,
 No wish I harbour unfulfilled shall die:
 Omnipotence and omniscience shall be mine."
 And Savitri heard the voice, the warped echo heard
 And turning to her being of power she spoke:
 "Madonna of might, Mother of works and force,
 Thou art a portion of my soul put forth
 To help mankind and help the travail of Time.
 Because thou art in him, man hopes and dares;

SAVITRI

Because thou art, men's souls can climb the heavens
 And walk like Gods in the presence of the Supreme.
 But without wisdom power is like a wind,
 It can breathe upon the heights and kiss the sky,
 It cannot build the extreme eternal things.
 Thou hast given men strength, wisdom thou couldst not give.
 One day I will return, a bringer of light,
 Then I will give to thee the mirror of God;
 Thou shalt see self and world as by him they are seen
 Reflected in the bright pool of thy soul.
 Thy wisdom shall be vast as vast thy power.
 Then hate shall dwell no more in human hearts,
 And fear and weakness shall desert men's lives,
 The cry of the ego shall be hushed within,
 Its lion roar that claims the world as food,
 All shall be might and bliss and happy force."

Ascending still her spirit's upward route
 She came into a high and happy space,
 A wide tower of vision whence all could be seen
 And all was centred in a single view
 As when by distance separate scenes grow one
 And a harmony is made of hues at war.
 The wind was still and fragrance packed the air.
 There was a carol of birds and murmur of bees,
 And all that is common and natural and sweet,
 Yet intimately divine to heart and soul.
 A nearness thrilled of the spirit to its source
 And deepest things seemed obvious, close and true.
 Here, living centre of that vision of peace,
 A Woman sat in clear and crystal light:
 Heaven had unveiled its lustre in her eyes,
 Her feet were moonbeams, her face was a bright sun,
 Her smile could persuade a dead lacerated heart
 To live again and feel the hands of calm.
 A low music heard became her floating voice:
 "O Savitri, I am thy secret soul.
 I have come down to the wounded desolate earth
 To heal her pangs and lull her heart to rest
 And lay her head upon the Mother's lap

BOOK VII CANTO IV

That she may dream of God and know his peace
 And draw the harmony of higher spheres
 Into the rhythm of earth's rude troubled days.
 I show to her the figures of bright Gods
 And bring strength and solace to her struggling life;
 High things that now are only words and forms
 I reveal to her in the body of their power.
 I am peace that steals into man's war-worn breast,
 Amid the reign of Hell his acts create
 A hostel where Heaven's messengers can lodge;
 I am charity with the kindly hands that bless;
 I am silence mid the noisy tramp of life;
 I am Knowledge poring on her cosmic map.
 In the anomalies of the human heart
 Where Good and Evil are close bed-fellows
 And Light is by Darkness dogged at every step,
 Where his largest knowledge is an ignorance,
 I am the Power that labours towards the best
 And works for God and looks up towards the heights.
 I make even sin and error stepping stones
 And all experience a long march towards Light.
 Out of the Inconscient I build consciousness
 And lead through death to reach immortal life.
 Many are God's forms by which he grows in man;
 They stamp his thoughts and deeds with divinity,
 Uplift the stature of the human clay
 Or slowly transmute it into heaven's gold.
 He is the Good for which men fight and die,
 He is the War of Right with Titan Wrong,
 He is Freedom rising deathless from her pyre,
 He is Valour guarding still the desperate pass
 Or lone and erect on the shattered barricade
 Or a sentinel in the dangerous echoing Night.
 He is the crown of the martyr burned in flame
 And the glad resignation of the saint
 And courage indifferent to the wounds of Time
 And the hero's might wrestling with death and Fate.
 He is Wisdom incarnate on a glorious throne
 And the calm autocracy of the sage's rule.
 He is the high and solitary Thought

SAVITRI

Aloof above the ignorant multitude:
 He is the prophet's voice, the sight of the seer.
 He is Beauty nectar of the passionate soul,
 He is the Truth by which the spirit lives.
 He is the riches of the spiritual Vast
 Poured out in healing streams on indigent Life;
 He is Eternity lured from hour to hour,
 He is Infinity in a little space:
 He is Immortality in the arms of Death.
 These powers I am and at my call they come.
 Thus slowly I lift man's soul nearer the Light.
 But human mind clings to its ignorance,
 And to its littleness the human heart,
 And to its right to grief the earthly life.
 Only when Eternity takes Time by the hand,
 Only when infinity weds the finite's thought,
 Can man be free from himself and live with God.
 I bring meanwhile the gods upon the earth;
 I bring back hope to the despairing heart;
 I give peace to the humble and the great
 And shed my grace on the foolish and the wise.
 I shall save earth, if earth consents to be saved.
 Then Love shall at last unwounded tread earth's soil;
 Man's mind shall admit the sovereignty of Truth
 And body bear the immense descent of God."
 She spoke and from the ignorant nether plane
 A cry, a warped echo naked and shuddering came.
 A voice of the sense-shackled human mind
 Carried its proud complaint of Godlike power
 Hedged by the limits of a mortal's thoughts,
 Bound in the chains of earthly ignorance.
 Imprisoned in his body and his brain
 The mortal cannot see God's mighty whole
 Or share in his vast and deep identity
 Who stands unguessed within our ignorant hearts
 And knows all things because he is one with all.
 Man only sees the cosmic surfaces.
 Then wondering what may lie hid from the sense
 A little way he delves to depths below:
 But soon he stops, he cannot reach life's core

BOOK VII CANTO IV

Or commune with the throbbing heart of things.
 He sees the naked body of the Truth
 Though often baffled by her endless garbs,
 But cannot look upon her soul within.
 Then, furious for a knowledge absolute,
 He tears all details out and stabs and digs:
 Only the shape's contents he holds for use;
 The spirit escapes or dies beneath his knife.
 He sees as a blank stretch, a giant waste
 The crowding riches of infinity.
 The finite he has made his central field,
 Its plan dissects, masters its processes,
 That which moves all is hidden from his gaze,
 His poring eyes miss the unseen behind.
 He has the blind man's subtle unerring touch
 Or the slow traveller's sight of distant scenes;
 The soul's revealing contacts are not his.
 Yet is he visited by intuitive light
 And inspiration comes from the Unknown;
 But only reason and sense he feels as sure,
 They only are his trusted witnesses.
 Thus is he baulked, his splendid effort vain;
 His knowledge scans bright pebbles on the shore
 Of the huge ocean of his ignorance.
 Yet grandiose were the accents of that cry,
 A cosmic pathos trembled in its tone.
 "I am the mind of God's great ignorant world
 Ascending to knowledge by the steps he made;
 I am the all-discovering Thought of man.
 I am a god fettered by Matter and sense,
 An animal prisoned in a fence of thorns,
 A beast of labour asking for his food,
 A smith tied to his anvil and his forge.
 Yet have I loosened the cord, enlarged my room.
 I have mapped the heavens and analysed the stars,
 Described the orbits through the grooves of Space,
 Measured the miles that separate the suns,
 Computed their longevity in Time.
 I have delved into earth's bowels and torn out
 The riches guarded by her dull brown soil.

SAVITRI

I have classed the changes of her stony crust
 And of her biography discovered the dates,
 Rescued the pages of all Nature's plan.
 The tree of evolution I have sketched,
 Each branch and twig and leaf in its own place,
 In the embryo tracked the history of forms,
 And the genealogy framed of all that lives.
 I have detected plasm and cell and gene,
 The protozoa traced, man's ancestors,
 The humble originals from whom he rose;
 I know how he was born and how he dies;
 Only what end he serves I know not yet,
 Or if there is aim at all or any end
 Or push of rich creative purposeful joy
 In the wide works of the terrestrial power.
 I have caught her intricate processes, none is left:
 Her huge machinery is in my hands;
 I have seized the cosmic energies for my use.
 I have pored on her infinitesimal elements
 And her invisible atoms have unmasked:
 All Matter is a book I have perused;
 Only some pages now are left to read.
 I have seen the ways of life, the paths of mind;
 I have studied the methods of the ant and ape
 And the behaviour learnt of man and worm.
 If God is at work his secrets I have found.
 But still the Cause of things is left in doubt,
 Their truth flees from pursuit into a void;
 When all has been explained nothing is known.
 What chose the process, whence the Power sprung
 I know not and perhaps shall never know.
 A mystery is this mighty Nature's birth;
 A mystery is the elusive stream of mind,
 A mystery the protean freak of life.
 What I have learnt, Chance leaps to contradict;
 What I have built is seized and torn by Fate.
 I can foresee the acts of Matter's force,
 But not the march of the destiny of man:
 He is driven upon paths he did not choose,
 He falls trampled underneath the rolling wheels.

BOOK VII CANTO IV

My great philosophies are a reasoned guess;
 The mystic heavens that claim the human soul
 Are a charlatanism of the imagining brain:
 All is a speculation or a dream:
 In the end the world itself becomes a doubt:
 The infinitesimal's jest mocks mass and shape,
 A laugh peals from the infinite's finite mask.
 Perhaps the world is an error of our sight,
 A trick repeated in each flash of sense,
 An unreal mind hallucinates the soul
 With a stress-vision of false reality,
 Or a dance of Maya veils the Void unborn.
 Even if a greater consciousness I could reach,
 What profit is it then for Thought to win
 A Real which is for ever ineffable
 Or hunt to its lair the bodiless Self or make
 The Unknowable the target of the soul?
 Nay, let me work within my mortal bounds,
 Not live beyond life nor think beyond the mind;
 Our smallness saves us from the Infinite.
 In a frozen grandeur lone and desolate
 Call me not to die the great eternal Death,
 Left naked of my own humanity
 In the chill vast of the spirit's boundlessness.
 Each creature by its nature's limits lives,
 And how can one evade his native fate?
 Human I am, human let me remain
 Till in the Inconscient I fall dumb and sleep.
 A high insanity, a chimera is this,
 To think that God lives hidden in the clay
 And that eternal Truth can dwell in Time,
 And call to her to save our self and world.
 How can man grow immortal and divine
 Transmuting the very stuff of which he is made?
 This wizard Gods may dream, not thinking men."

And Savitri heard the voice, the warped answer heard
 And turning to her being of light she spoke:
 "Madonna of light, Mother of joy and peace,
 Thou art a portion of my self put forth
 To raise the spirit to its forgotten heights

SAVITRI

And wake the soul by touches of the heavens.
 Because thou art, the soul draws near to God;
 Because thou art, love grows in spite of hate
 And knowledge walks unslain in the pit of Night.
 But not by showering heaven's golden rain
 Upon the intellect's hard and rocky soil
 Can the tree of Paradise flower on earthly ground
 And the Bird of Paradise sit upon life's boughs
 And the winds of Paradise visit mortal air.
 Even if thou rain down intuition's rays,
 The mind of man will think it earth's own gleam,
 His spirit by spiritual ego sink,
 Or his soul dream shut in sainthood's brilliant cell
 Where only a bright shadow of God can come:
 His hunger for the eternal thou must nurse
 And fill his yearning heart with heaven's fire
 And bring God down into his body and life.
 One day I shall return, His hands in mine
 And thou shalt see the face of the Absolute.
 Then shall the holy marriage be achieved,
 Then shall the divine family be born.
 There shall be light and peace in all the worlds."

CANTO FIVE

THE FINDING OF THE SOUL

ONWARD she passed seeking the soul's mystic cave.
 At first she stepped into a night of God.
 The light was quenched that helps the labouring world,
 The power that struggles and stumbles in our life;
 This inefficient mind gave up its thoughts,
 The striving heart its unavailing hopes.
 All Knowledge failed and the Idea's forms,
 And Wisdom screened in awe her lowly head
 Feeling a Truth too great for thought or speech,
 Formless, ineffable, for ever the same.
 An innocent and holy Ignorance
 Adored like one who worships formless God
 The unseen light she could not claim nor own.
 In a simple purity of emptiness
 Her mind knelt down before the unknowable.
 All was abolished save her naked self
 And the prostrate yearning of her surrendered heart.
 There was no strength in her, no pride of force;
 The lofty burning of desire had sunk
 Ashamed, a vanity of separate self,
 The hope of spiritual greatness fled,
 Salvation she asked not nor a heavenly crown:
 Humanity seemed now too proud a state.
 Her self was nothing, God alone was all,
 Yet God she knew not but only knew he was.
 A sacred darkness brooded now within,
 The world was a deep darkness great and nude.
 This Void held more than all the teeming worlds,
 This blank felt more than all that Time has borne,
 This dark knew dumbly, immensely the Unknown.

SAVITRI

But all was formless, voiceless, infinite.
 As might a shadow walk in a shadowy scene,
 A small naught passing through a mightier Naught,
 A night of person in a bare outline
 Crossing a fathomless impersonal Night,
 Silent she moved, empty and absolute.
 In endless Time her soul reached a wide end;
 The spaceless vast became her spirit's place.
 At last a change approached, the emptiness broke;
 A wave rippled within, the world had stirred;
 Once more her inner self became her space.
 There was felt a blissful nearness to the Goal;
 Heaven leaned low to kiss the sacred hill,
 The air trembled with passion and delight.
 A rose of splendour on a tree of dreams,
 The face of Dawn out of mooned twilight grew.
 Day came, priest of a sacrifice of joy
 Into the worshipping silence of her world;
 He carried a mortal lustre as his robe,
 Trailed Heaven like a purple scarf and wore
 As his vermilion caste-mark a red sun.
 As if an old remembered dream come true,
 She recognised in her prophetic mind
 The imperishable lustre of that sky,
 The tremulous sweetness of that happy air
 And, covered from mind's view and life's approach,
 The mystic cavern in the sacred hill
 And knew the dwelling of her secret soul.
 As if in some Elysian occult depth,
 Truth's last retreat from thought's profaning touch,
 As if in a rock-temple's solitude hid,
 God's refuge from an ignorant worshipping world,
 It lay withdrawn even from life's inner sense,
 Receding from the entangled heart's desire.
 A marvellous brooding twilight met the eyes
 And a holy stillness held that voiceless space.
 An awful dimness wrapped the great rock-doors
 Carved in the massive stone of Matter's trance.
 Two golden serpents round the lintel curled,
 Enveloping it with their pure and dreadful strength,

BOOK VII CANTO V

Looked out with wisdom's deep and luminous eyes.
 An eagle covered it with wide conquering wings.
 Flames of self-lost immobile reverie,
 Doves crowded the grey musing cornices
 Like sculptured postures of white-bosomed peace.
 Across the threshold's sleep she entered in
 And found herself amid great figures of gods
 Conscious in stone and living without breath,
 Watching with fixed regard the soul of man,
 Executive figures of the cosmic self,
 World-symbols of immutable potency.
 On the walls covered with significant shapes
 Looked at her the life-scene of man and beast
 And the high meaning of the life of gods,
 The power and necessity of these numberless worlds
 And faces of beings and stretches of world-space
 Spoke the succinct and inexhaustible
 Hieratic message of the climbing planes.
 In their immensitude signing infinity
 They were the extension of the self of God
 And housed, impassively receiving all,
 His figures and his small and mighty acts
 And his passion and his birth and life and death
 And his return to immortality.
 To the abiding and eternal is their climb,
 To the pure existence everywhere the same,
 To the sheer consciousness and the absolute force
 And the unimaginable and formless bliss,
 To the mirth in Time and the timeless mystery
 Of the triune being who is all and one
 And yet is no one but himself apart.
 There was no step of breathing men, no sound,
 Only the living nearness of the soul.
 Yet all the worlds and God himself were there,
 For every symbol was a reality
 And brought the Presence which had given it life.
 All this she saw and inly felt and knew
 Not by some thought of mind but by the self.
 A light not born of sun or moon nor fire,
 A light that dwelt within and saw within

SAVITRI

Shedding an intimate visibility,
 Made secrecy more revealing than the word:
 Our sight and sense are a fallible gaze and touch
 And only the spirit's vision is wholly true.
 As thus she passed in that mysterious place
 Through room and room, through door and rock-hewn door,
 She felt herself made one with all she saw.
 A sealed identity within her woke;
 She knew herself the Beloved of the Supreme:
 These Gods and Goddesses were he and she:
 The Mother was she of Beauty and Delight,
 The Word in Brahma's vast creating clasp,
 The World-Puissance on almighty Shiva's lap,—
 The Master and the Mother of all lives
 Watching the worlds their twin regard had made,
 And Krishna and Radha for ever entwined in bliss,
 The Adorer and Adored self-lost and one.
 In the last chamber on a golden seat
 One sat whose shape no vision could define,
 Only one felt the world's unattainable fount,
 A Power of which she was a straying Force,
 An invisible Beauty, goal of the world's desire,
 A Sun of which all knowledge is a beam,
 A Greatness without whom no life could be.
 Thence all departed into silent self,
 And all became formless and pure and bare.
 Then through a tunnel dug in the last rock
 She came out where there shone a deathless sun.
 A house was there all made of flame and light
 And crossing a wall of doorless living fire
 There suddenly she met her secret soul.

A being stood immortal in transience,
 Deathless dallying with momentary things,
 In whose wide eyes of tranquil happiness
 Which pity and sorrow could not abrogate
 Infinity turned its gaze on finite shapes:
 Observer of the silent steps of the hours
 And the passing scenes of the Everlasting's play,
 In the mystery of its selecting will,

BOOK VII CANTO V

In the Divine Comedy a participant,
 The Spirit's conscious representative,
 God's delegate in our humanity,
 Comrade of the universe, the Transcendent's ray,
 She had come into the mortal body's room
 To play at ball with Time and Circumstance.
 A joy in the world her master movement here,
 The passion of the game lighted her eyes:
 A smile on her lips welcomed earth's bliss and grief,
 A laugh was her return to pleasure and pain.
 All things she saw as a masquerade of Truth
 Disguised in the costumes of Ignorance,
 Crossing the years to immortality:
 All she could front with the strong spirit's peace.
 But since she knows the toil of mind and life
 As a mother feels and shares her children's lives,
 She puts forth a small portion of herself,
 A being no bigger than the thumb of man
 Into a hidden region of the heart
 To face the pang and to forget the bliss,
 To share the suffering and endure earth's wounds
 And labour mid the labour of the stars.
 This in us laughs and weeps, suffers the stroke,
 Exults in victory, struggles for the crown,
 Identified with the mind and body and life,
 It takes on itself their anguish and defeat,
 Bleeds with Fate's whips and hangs upon the cross,
 Yet is the unwounded and immortal self
 Supporting the actor on the human scene.
 Through this she sends us her glory and her powers,
 Pushes to wisdom's heights, through misery's gulfs;
 She gives us strength to do our daily task
 And sympathy that partakes of others' grief
 And the little strength we have to help our race,
 We who must fill the roll of the universe
 Acting itself out in a slight human shape
 And on our shoulders carry the struggling world.
 This is in us the godhead small and marred;
 In this human portion of divinity
 She seats the greatness of the Soul in Time

SAVITRI

To uplift from light to light, from power to power,
 Till on a heavenly peak it stands, a king.
 In body weak, in its heart an invincible might,
 It climbs stumbling, held up by an unseen hand,
 A toiling spirit in a mortal shape.
 Here in this chamber of flame and light they met;
 They looked upon each other, knew themselves,
 The secret deity and its human part,
 The calm immortal and the struggling soul.
 Then with a magic transformation's speed
 They rushed into each other and grew one.

Once more she was human upon earthly soil
 In the muttering night amid the rain-swept woods
 And the rude cottage where she sat in trance:
 That subtle world withdrew deeply within
 Behind the sun-veil of the inner sight.
 But now the half-opened lotus bud of her heart
 Had bloomed and stood disclosed to the earthly ray;
 In an image shone revealed her secret soul.
 There was no wall severing the soul and mind,
 No mystic fence guarding from the claims of life.
 In its deep lotus home her being sat
 As if on concentration's marble seat,
 Calling the mighty Mother of the worlds
 To make this earthly tenement her house.
 As in a flash from a supernal light,
 A living image of the original Power,
 A face, a form came down into her heart
 And made of it its temple and pure abode.
 But when its feet had touched the quivering bloom,
 A mighty movement rocked the inner space
 As if a world were shaken and found its soul
 Out of the Inconscient's soulless mindless Night:
 A flaming serpent rose released from sleep.
 It rose billowing its coils and stood erect
 And climbing mightily stormily on its way
 It touched her centres with its flaming mouth:
 As if a fiery kiss had broken their sleep,
 They bloomed and laughed surcharged with light and bliss;

BOOK VII CANTO V

Then at the crown it joined the Eternal's space.
 In the flower of the head, in the flower of Matter's base,
 In each divine stronghold and Nature-knot
 It held together the mystic stream which joins
 The viewless summits with the unseen depths,
 The string of forts that make the frail defence
 Safeguarding us against the enormous world.
 Our lines of self-expression in its Vast,
 An image sat of the original Power
 Wearing the mighty Mother's form and face.
 Armed, bearer of the weapon and the sign
 Whose occult might no magic can imitate,
 Manifold yet one she sat, a guardian force:
 A saviour gesture stretched her lifted arm,
 And symbol of some native cosmic strength,
 A sacred beast lay prone below her feet,
 A silent flame-eyed mass of living force.
 All underwent a high celestial change;
 Breaking the black Inconscient's blind mute wall,
 Effacing the circles of the Ignorance,
 Powers and divinities burst flaming forth;
 Each part of the being trembling with delight
 Lay overwhelmed with tides of happiness
 And saw her hand in every circumstance
 And felt her touch in every limb and cell:
 In the country of the lotus of the head
 Which thinking mind has made its busy space,
 In the castle of the lotus twixt the brows
 Whence it shoots the arrows of its sight and will,
 In the passage of the lotus of the throat
 Where speech must rise and the expressing mind
 And the heart's impulse run towards word and fact,
 A glad uplift and a new working came.
 The immortal's thoughts displaced our bounded view,
 The immortal's thoughts earth's drab idea and sense;
 All things now bore a deeper heavenlier sense.
 A glad clear harmony marked their truth's outline,
 Re-set the balance and measures of the world.
 Each shape showed its occult design, unveiled
 God's meaning in it for which it was made

SAVITRI

And the vivid splendour of his artist thought.
 A channel of the mighty Mother's choice,
 The immortal's will took into its calm control
 Our blind or erring government of life;
 A loose republic once of wants and needs,
 Then bowed to the uncertain sovereign mind,
 Life now obeyed to a diviner rule
 And every act became an act of God.
 In the kingdom of the lotus of the heart
 Love chanting its pure hymeneal hymn
 Made life and body mirrors of sacred joy
 And all the emotions gave themselves to God.
 In the navel lotus's broad imperial range
 Its proud ambitions and its master lusts
 Were tamed into instruments of a great calm sway
 To do a work of God on earthly soil.
 In the narrow nether centres' petty parts
 Its childish game of daily dwarf desires
 Was changed into a sweet and boisterous play,
 A romp of little gods with life in Time.
 In the deep place where once the Serpent slept,
 There came a grip on Matter's giant powers
 For large utilities in life's little space;
 A firm ground was made for Heaven's descending might.
 Behind all reigned her sovereign deathless soul:
 Casting aside its veil of Ignorance,
 Allied to gods and cosmic beings and powers
 It built the harmony of its human state;
 Surrendered into the great World-Mother's hands
 Only she obeyed her sole supreme behest
 In the enigma of the Inconscient's world.
 A secret soul behind supporting all
 Is master and witness of our ignorant life,
 Admits the Person's look and Nature's role.
 But once the hidden doors are flung apart
 Then the veiled king steps out in Nature's front;
 A Light comes down into the Ignorance,
 Its heavy painful knot loosens its grasp:
 The mind becomes a mastered instrument
 And life a hue and figure of the soul.

BOOK VII CANTO V

All happy grows towards knowledge and towards bliss.
 A divine Puissance then takes Nature's place
 And pushes the movements of our body and mind;
 Possessor of our passionate hopes and dreams,
 The beloved despot of our thoughts and acts,
 She streams into us with her unbound force,
 Into mortal limbs the Immortal's rapture and power.
 An inner law of beauty shapes our lives;
 Our words become the natural speech of Truth,
 Each thought is a ripple on a sea of Light.
 Then sin and virtue leave the cosmic lists;
 They struggle no more in our delivered hearts:
 Our acts chime with God's simple natural good
 Or serve the rule of a supernal Right.
 All moods unlovely, evil and untrue
 Forsake their stations in fierce disarray
 And hide their shame in the subconscious's dusk;
 Then lifts the mind a cry of victory:
 "O soul, my soul, we have created Heaven,
 Within we have found the kingdom here of God,
 His fortress built in a loud ignorant world.
 Our life is entrenched between two rivers of Light,
 We have turned space into a gulf of peace
 And made the body a capitol of bliss.
 What more, what more, if more must still be done?"
 In the slow process of the evolving spirit,
 In the brief stade between a death and birth
 A first perfection's stage is reached at last;
 Out of the wood and stone of our nature's stuff
 A temple is shaped where the high gods could live.
 Even if the struggling world is left outside
 One man's perfection still can save the world.
 There is won a new proximity to the skies,
 A first betrothal of the Earth to Heaven,
 A deep concordat between Truth and Life:
 A camp of God is pitched in human time.

CANTO SIX

NIRVANA AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE
ALL-NEGATING ABSOLUTE

A CALM slow sun looked down from tranquil heavens.
 A routed sullen rearguard of retreat,
 The last rains had fled murmuring across the woods.
 Or failed, a sibilant whisper mid the leaves,
 And the great blue enchantment of the sky
 Recovered the deep rapture of its smile.
 Its mellow splendour unstressed by storm-licked heats
 Found room for a luxury of warm mild days,
 The night's gold treasure of autumnal moons
 Came floating shipped through ripples of fairy air.
 And Savitri's life was glad, fulfilled like earth's;
 She had found herself, she knew her being's aim.
 Although her kingdom of marvellous change within
 Remained unspoken in her secret breast,
 All that lived round her felt its magic's charm:
 The trees' rustling voices told it to the winds,
 Flowers spoke in ardent hues an unknown joy,
 The birds' carolling became a canticle,
 The beasts forgot their strife and lived at ease.
 Absorbed in wide communion with the Unseen
 The mild ascetics of the wood received
 A sudden greatening of their lonely muse.
 This bright perfection of her inner state
 Poured overflowing into her outward scene,
 Made beautiful dull common natural things
 And action wonderful and time divine.
 Even the smallest meanest work became
 A sweet or glad and glorious sacrament,
 An offering to the self of the great world

BOOK VII CANTO VI

Or a service to the One in each and all.
 A light invaded all from her being's light;
 Her heart-beats' dance communicated bliss:
 Happiness grew happier, shared with her, by her touch
 And grief some solace found when she drew near.
 Above the cherished head of Satyavan
 She saw not now Fate's dark and lethal orb;
 A golden circle round a mystic sun
 Disclosed to her new-born predicting sight
 The cyclic rondure of a sovereign life.
 In her visions and deep-etched veridical dreams,
 In brief shiftings of the future's heavy screen,
 He lay not by a dolorous decree
 A victim in the dismal antre of death
 Or borne to blissful regions far from her
 Forgetting the sweetness of earth's warm delight,
 Forgetting the passionate oneness of love's clasp,
 Absolved in the self-rapt immortal's bliss.
 Always he was with her, a living soul
 That met her eyes with close enamoured eyes,
 A living body near to her body's joy.
 But now no longer in these great wild woods
 In kinship with the days of bird and beast
 And levelled to the bareness of earth's brown breast,
 But mid the thinking high-built lives of men
 In tapestried chambers and on crystal floors,
 In armoured town or gardened pleasure-walks,
 Even in distance closer than her thoughts,
 Body to body near, soul near to soul,
 Moving as if by a common breath and will,
 They were tied in the single circling of their days
 Together by love's unseen atmosphere,
 Inseparable like the earth and sky.
 Thus for a while she trod the Golden Path;
 This was the sun before abysmal Night.
 Once as she sat in deep felicitous muse,
 Still quivering from her lover's strong embrace,
 And made her joy a bridge twixt earth and heaven,
 An abyss yawned suddenly beneath her heart.
 A vast and nameless fear dragged at her nerves

SAVITRI

As drags a wild beast its half-slaughtered prey;
 It seemed to have no den from which it sprang:
 It was not hers, but hid its unseen cause.
 Then rushing came its vast and fearful Fount.
 A formless Dread with shapeless endless wings
 Filling the universe with its dangerous breath,
 A denser darkness than the Night could bear,
 Enveloped the heavens and possessed the earth.
 A rolling surge of silent death, it came
 Curving round the far edge of the quaking globe;
 Effacing heaven with its enormous stride
 It willed to expunge the choked and anguished air
 And end the fable of the joy of life.
 It seemed her very being to forbid
 Abolishing all by which her nature lived
 And laboured to blot out her body and soul,
 A clutch of some half-seen Invisible,
 An ocean of terror and of sovereign might,
 A person and a black Infinity.
 It seemed to cry to her without thought or word
 The message of its dark eternity
 And the awful meaning of its silences:
 Out of some sullen monstrous vast arisen,
 Out of an abysmal deep of grief and fear
 Imagined by some blind regardless self,
 A consciousness of being without its joy,
 Empty of thought, incapable of bliss,
 That felt life blank and nowhere found a soul,
 A voice to the dumb anguish of the heart
 Conveyed a stark sense of unspoken words;
 In her own depths she heard the unuttered thought
 That made unreal the world and all life meant.
 "Who art thou who claim'st thy crown or separate birth,
 The illusion of thy soul's reality
 And personal godhead on an ignorant globe
 In the animal body of imperfect man?
 Hope not to be happy in a world of pain
 And dream not, listening to the unspoken Word
 And dazzled by the inexpressible Ray,
 Transcending the mute Superconscient's realm

BOOK VII CANTO VI

To give a body to the Unknowable,
 Or for a sanction to thy heart's delight
 To burden with bliss the silent still Supreme,
 Profaning its bare and formless sanctity,
 Or call into thy chamber the Divine
 And sit with God tasting a human joy.
 I have created all, all I devour;
 I am Death and the dark terrible Mother of life,
 I am Kali black and naked in the world,
 I am Maya and the universe is my cheat.
 I lay waste human happiness with my breath
 And slay the will to live, the joy to be
 That all may pass back into nothingness
 And only abide the eternal and absolute.
 For only the blank Eternal can be true.
 All else is shadow and flash in Mind's bright-glass,
 Mind, hollow mirror in which Ignorance sees
 A splendid figure of its own false Self
 And dreams it sees a glorious solid world.
 O soul, inventor of man's thoughts and hopes,
 Thyself the invention of the moments' stream,
 Illusion's centre or subtle apex point,
 At last know thyself, from vain existence cease."
 A shadow of the negating Absolute,
 The intolerant Darkness travelled surging past
 And ebbed in her the formidable Voice.
 It left behind her inner world laid waste:
 A barren silence weighed upon her heart,
 Her kingdom of delight was there no more;
 Only her soul remained, its emptied stage,
 Awaiting the unknown eternal Will.
 Then from the heights a greater Voice came down,
 The Word that touches the heart and finds the soul,
 The voice of Light after the voice of Night:
 The cry of the Abyss drew Heaven's reply,
 A might of storm chased by the might of the Sun:
 "O Soul, bare not thy kingdom to the foe;
 Consent to hide thy royalty of bliss
 Lest Time and Fate find out its avenues
 And beat with thunderous knock upon thy gates.

SAVITRI

Hide whilst thou canst thy treasure of separate self
 Behind the luminous rampart of thy depths
 Till of a vaster empire it grows part.
 But not for self alone the self is won:
 Content abide not with one conquered realm;
 Adventure all to make the whole world thine,
 To break into greater kingdoms turn thy force.
 Fear not to be nothing that thou mayst be all;
 Assent to the emptiness of the Supreme
 That all in thee may reach its absolute.
 Accept to be small and human on the earth,
 Interrupting thy new-born divinity,
 That man may find his utter self in God.
 If for thy own sake only thou hast come,
 An immortal spirit into the mortal's world,
 To found thy luminous kingdom in God's dark,
 In the Inconscient's realm one shining star,
 One door in the Ignorance opened upon light,
 Why hadst thou any need to come at all?
 Thou hast come down into a struggling world
 To aid a blind and suffering mortal race,
 To open to Light the eyes that could not see,
 To bring down bliss into the heart of grief,
 To make thy life a bridge twixt earth and heaven;
 If thou wouldst save the toiling universe,
 The vast universal suffering feel as thine:
 Thou must bear the sorrow that thou claim'st to heal;
 The day-bringer must walk in darkest night.
 He who would save the world must share its pain.
 If he knows not grief, how shall he find grief's cure?
 If far he walks above mortality's head,
 How shall the mortal reach that too high path?
 If one of theirs they see scale heaven's peaks,
 Men then can hope to learn that titan climb.
 God must be born on earth and be as man
 That man being human may grow even as God.
 He who would save the world must be one with the world,
 All suffering things contain in his heart's space
 And bear the grief and joy of all that lives.
 His soul must be wider than the universe

BOOK VII CANTO VI

And feel eternity as its very stuff,
 Rejecting the moment's personality,
 Know itself older than the birth of Time,
 Creation an incident in its consciousness,
 Arcturus and Belphegor grains of fire
 Circling in a corner of its boundless self,
 The world's destruction a small transient storm
 In the calm infinity it has become.
 If thou wouldst a little loosen the vast chain,
 Draw back from the world that the Idea has made,
 Thy mind's selection from the Infinite,
 Thy senses' gloss on the Infinitesimal's dance,
 Then shalt thou know how the great bondage came.
 Banish all thought from thee and be God's void.
 Then shalt thou uncover the Unknowable
 And the Superconscient conscious grow on thy tops;
 Infinity's vision through thy gaze shall pierce,
 Thou shalt look into the eyes of the Unknown;
 Find the hid Truth in things seen null and false,
 Behind things known discover Mystery's rear.
 Thou shalt be one with God's bare reality
 And the miraculous world he has become
 And the diviner miracle still to be
 When Nature who is now unconscious God
 Translucent grows to the Eternal's light,
 Her seeing his sight, her walk his steps of power
 And life is filled with a spiritual joy
 And Matter is the Spirit's willing bride.
 Consent to be nothing and none, dissolve Time's work,
 Cast off thy mind, step back from form and name.
 Annul thyself that only God may be."

Thus spoke the mighty and uplifting Voice,
 And Savitri heard; she bowed her head and mused
 Plunging her deep regard into herself
 In her soul's privacy in the silent Night.
 Aloof and standing back detached and calm,
 A witness of the drama of herself,
 A student of her own interior scene,
 She watched the passion and the toil of life

SAVITRI

And heard in the crowded thoroughfares of mind
 The unceasing tread and passage of her thoughts.
 All she allowed to rise that chose to stir;
 Calling, compelling nought, forbidding nought,
 She left all to the process formed in Time
 And the free initiative of Nature's will.
 Thus following the complex human play
 She heard the prompter's voice behind the scenes,
 Perceived the original libretto's set
 And the organ theme of the composer Force.
 All she beheld that surges from man's depths,
 The animal instincts prowling mid life's trees,
 The impulses that whisper to the heart
 And passion's thunder-chase sweeping the nerves;
 She saw the Powers that stare from the Abyss
 And the wordless Light that liberates the soul.
 But most her gaze pursued the birth of thought.
 Affranchised from the look of surface mind
 She paused not to survey the official case,
 The issue of forms from the office of the brain,
 Its factory of thought-sounds and soundless words
 And voices stored within unheard by men,
 Its mint and treasury of shining coin.
 These were but counters in mind's symbol game,
 A gramophone's discs, a reproduction's film,
 A list of signs, a cipher and a code.
 In our unseen subtle body thought is born
 Or there it enters from the cosmic field.
 Oft from her soul stepped out a naked thought
 Luminous with mystiered lips and wonderful eyes;
 Or from her heart emerged some burning face
 And looked for life and love and passionate truth,
 Aspired to heaven or embraced the world
 Or led the fancy like a fleeting moon
 Across the dull sky of man's common days,
 Amidst the doubtful certitudes of earth's lore,
 To the celestial beauty of faith gave form
 As if at flower-prints in a dingy room
 Laughed in a golden vase one living rose.
 A thaumaturgist sat in her heart's deep,

BOOK VII CANTO VI

Compelled the forward stride, the upward look,
 Till wonder leapt into the illumined breast
 And life grew marvellous with transfiguring hope.
 A seeing will pondered between the brows;
 Thoughts, glistening Angels stood behind the brain
 In flashing armour, folding hands of prayer,
 And poured heaven's rays into the earthly form.
 Imaginations flamed up from her breast,
 Unearthly beauty, touches of surpassing joy
 And plans of miracle, dreams of delight:
 Around her navel lotus clustering close
 Her large sensations of the teeming worlds
 Streamed their dumb movements of the unformed Idea;
 Invading the small sensitive flower of the throat
 They brought their mute, unuttered resonances
 To kindle the figures of a heavenly speech.
 Below, desires formed their wordless wish,
 And longings of physical sweetness and ecstasy
 Translated into the accents of a cry
 Their grasp on objects and their clasp on souls.
 Her body's thoughts climbed from her conscious limbs
 And carried their yearnings to its mystic crown
 Where Nature's murmurs meet the Ineffable.
 But for the mortal prisoned in outward mind
 All must present their passports at its door;
 Disguised they must don the official cap and mask
 Or pass as manufactures of the brain,
 Unknown their secret truth and hidden source.
 Only to the inner mind they speak direct,
 Put on a body and assume a voice,
 Their passage seen, their message heard and known,
 Their birthplace and their natal mark revealed,
 And stand confessed to an immortal's sight,
 Our nature's messengers to the witness soul.
 Impenetrable, withheld from mortal sense,
 The inner chambers of the spirit's house
 Disclosed to her their happenings and their guests;
 Eyes looked through crevices in the invisible wall
 And through the secrecy of the unseen doors
 There came into mind's little frontal room

SAVITRI

Thoughts that enlarged our limited human range,
 Lifted the ideal's half-quenched or sinking torch
 Or peered through the finite at the infinite.
 A sight opened upon the invisible
 And sensed the shapes that mortal eyes see not,
 The sounds that mortal listening cannot hear,
 The blissful sweetness of the intangible's touch,
 The objects that to us are empty air
 Are there the stuff of daily experience
 And the common pabulum of sense and thought.
 The beings of the subtle realms appeared
 And scenes concealed behind our earthly scene;
 She saw the life of remote continents
 And distance deafen not to voices far;
 She felt the movements crossing unknown minds;
 The past's events occurred before her eyes.
 The great world's thoughts were part of her own thoughts,
 The feelings dumb for ever and unshared,
 The ideas that never found an utterance,
 The dim subconscious's incoherent hints
 Laid bare a meaning twisted deep and strange,
 The bizarre secret of their grumbling speech,
 Their links with underlying reality.
 The unseen grew visible and audible:
 Thoughts leaped down from a superconscious field
 Like eagles swooping from a viewless peak,
 Thoughts gleamed up from the screened subliminal depths
 Like golden fishes from a hidden sea.
 This world is a vast unbroken totality,
 A deep solidarity joins its contrary powers.
 God's summits look back on the mute Abyss.
 So man evolving to divinest heights
 Colloques still with the animal and the Djinn;
 The human godhead with star-gazer eyes
 Lives still in one house with the primal beast.
 The high meets the low, all is a single plan.
 So she beheld the many births of thought,
 If births can be of what eternal is;
 For the Eternal's powers are like himself,
 Timeless in the Timeless, in Time ever born.

BOOK VII CANTO VI

This too she saw that all in outer mind
 Is made, not born, a product perishable,
 Forged in the body's factory by earth-force.
 This mind is a dynamic small machine
 Producing ceaselessly till it wears out,
 With raw material drawn from the outside world,
 The patterns sketched out by an artist God.
 Often our thoughts are finished cosmic wares
 Admitted by a silent office gate
 And passed through the subconscious galleries,
 Then issued in Time's mart as private make.
 For now they bear the living person's stamp;
 A trick, a special hue claims them his own.
 All else is Nature's craft and this too hers.
 Our tasks are given, we are but instruments;
 Nothing is all our own that we create;
 The Power that acts in us is not our force:
 The genius too receives from some high fount
 Concealed in a supernal secrecy
 The work that gives him an immortal name.
 The word, the form, the charm, the glory and grace
 Are missioned sparks from a stupendous Fire;
 A sample from the laboratory of God
 Of which he holds the patent upon earth,
 Comes to him wrapt in golden coverings;
 He listens for Inspiration's postman knock
 And takes delivery of the priceless gift
 A little spoilt by the receiver mind
 Or mixed with the manufacture of his brain;
 When least defaced, then is it most divine.
 Although his ego claims the world for its use,
 Man is a dynamo for the cosmic work;
 Nature does most in him, God the high rest:
 Only his soul's acceptance is his own.
 This independent, once a power supreme,
 Self-born before the universe was made,
 Accepting cosmos, binds himself Nature's serf
 Till he becomes her freed man—or God's slave.
 This is the appearance in our mortal front;
 Our greater truth of being lies behind:

SAVITRI

Our consciousness is cosmic and immense,
 But only when we break through Matter's wall
 In that spiritual vastness can we stand
 Where we can live the masters of our world,
 And mind is only a means and body a tool.
 For above the birth of body and of thought
 Our spirit's truth lives in the naked self
 And from that height, unbound, surveys the world.
 Out of the mind she rose to escape its law
 That it might sleep in some deep shadow of self
 Or fall silent in the silence of the Unseen.
 High she attained and stood from Nature free
 And saw creation's life from far above,
 Thence upon all she laid her sovereign will
 To dedicate it to God's timeless calm:
 Then all grew tranquil in her being's space,
 Only sometimes small thoughts arose and fell
 Like quiet waves upon a silent sea
 Or ripples passing over a lonely pool
 When a stray stone disturbs its dreaming rest.
 Yet the mind's factory had ceased to work,
 There was no sound of the dynamo's throb,
 There came no call from the still fields of life.
 Then even those stirrings rose in her no more;
 Her mind now seemed like a vast empty room
 Or like a peaceful landscape without sound.
 This men call quietude and prize as peace.
 But to her deeper sight all yet was there,
 Effervescing like a chaos under a lid;
 Feelings and thoughts cried out for word and act
 But found no response in the silenced brain:
 All was suppressed but nothing yet expunged;
 At every moment might explosion come.
 Then this too paused; the body seemed a stone.
 All now was a wide mighty vacancy,
 But still excluded from eternity's hush;
 For still was far the repose of the Absolute
 And the ocean silence of Infinity.
 Even now some thoughts could cross her solitude:
 These surged not from the depths or from within

BOOK VII CANTO VI

Cast up from formlessness to seek a form,
 Spoke not the body's need nor voiced mind's call.
 These seemed not born nor made in human Time,
 Children of cosmic nature from a far world,
 Idea's shapes in complete armour of words
 Posted like travellers in an alien space.
 Out of some far expanse they seemed to come
 As if carried on vast wings like large white sails,
 And with easy access reached the inner ear
 As though they used a natural privileged right
 To the high royal entries of the soul.
 As yet their path lay deep concealed in light.
 Then looking to know whence the intruders came
 She saw a spiritual immensity
 Pervading and encompassing the world-space
 As ether our transparent tangible air,
 And through it sailing tranquilly a thought.
 As smoothly glides a ship nearing its port,
 Ignorant of embargo and blockade,
 Confident of entrance and the visa's seal,
 It came to the silent city of the brain
 Towards its accustomed and expectant quay,
 But met a barring will, a blow of Force
 And sank vanishing in the immensity.
 After a long vacant pause another appeared
 And others one by one suddenly emerged,
 Mind's unexpected visitors from the unseen
 Like far-off sails upon a lonely sea.
 But soon that commerce failed, none reached mind's coast.
 Then all grew still, nothing moved any more:
 Immobile, self-rapt, timeless, solitary
 A silent spirit pervaded silent Space.

In that absolute stillness bare and formidable
 There was glimpsed an all-negating Void supreme
 That claimed its mystic Nihil's sovereign right
 To cancel Nature and deny the soul.
 Even the nude sense of self grew pale and thin:
 Impersonal, signless, featureless, void of forms
 A blank pure consciousness had replaced the mind.

SAVITRI

Her spirit seemed the substance of a name,
 The world a pictured symbol drawn on self,
 A dream of images, a dream of sounds
 Built up the semblance of a universe
 Or lent to spirit the appearance of a world.
 This was self-seeing; in that intolerant hush
 No notion and no concept could take shape,
 There was no sense to frame the figure of things,
 A sheer self-sight was there, no thought arose.
 Emotion slept deep down in the still heart
 Or lay buried in a cemetery of peace:
 All feelings seemed quiescent, calm or dead,
 As if the heart-strings rent could work no more
 And joy and grief could never rise again.
 The heart beat on with an unconscious rhythm
 But no response came from it and no cry.
 Vain was the provocation of events;
 Nothing within answered an outside touch,
 No nerve was stirred and no reaction rose.
 Yet still her body saw and moved and spoke;
 It understood without the aid of thought,
 It said whatever needed to be said,
 It did whatever needed to be done.
 There was no person there behind the act,
 No mind that chose or passed the fitting word:
 All wrought like an unerring apt machine.
 As if continuing old habitual turns,
 And pushed by an old unexhausted force
 The engine did the work for which it was made:
 Her consciousness looked on and took no part;
 All it upheld, in nothing had a share.
 There was no strong initiator will;
 An incoherence crossing a firm void
 Slipped into an order of related chance.
 A pure perception was the only power
 That stood behind her action and her sight.
 If that retired, all objects would be extinct,
 Her private universe would cease to be,
 The house she had built with bricks of thought and sense
 In the beginning after the birth of Space.

BOOK VII CANTO VI

This seeing was identical with the seen;
 It knew without knowledge all that could be known,
 It saw impartially the world go by,
 But in the same supreme unmoving glance
 Saw too its abysmal unreality.
 It watched the figure of the cosmic game,
 But the thought and inner life in forms seemed dead
 Abolished by her own collapse of thought:
 A hollow physical shell persisted still.
 All seemed a brilliant shadow of itself,
 A cosmic film of scenes and images:
 The enduring mass and outline of the hills
 Was a design sketched on a silent mind
 And held to a tremulous false solidity
 By constant beats of visionary sight;
 The forest with its emerald multitudes
 Clothed with its show of hues vague empty Space,
 A painting's colours hiding a surface void
 That flickered upon dissolution's edge;
 The blue heavens, an illusion of the eyes,
 Roofed in the mind's illusion of a world.
 The men who walked beneath an unreal sky
 Seemed mobile puppets out of cardboard cut
 And pushed by unseen hands across the soil
 Or moving pictures upon Fancy's film:
 There was no soul within, no power of life.
 The brain's vibrations that appear like thought,
 The nerve's brief answer to each contact's knock,
 The heart's quiverings felt as joy and grief and love
 Were twitchings of the body, their seeming self,
 That body forged from atoms and formed gas
 A manufactured lie of Maya's make,
 Its life a dream seen by the sleeping Void.
 The animals lone or trooping through the glades
 Fled like a passing vision of beauty and grace
 Imagined by some all-creating Eye.
 Yet something was there behind the fading scene;
 Wherever she turned, at whatsoever she looked,
 It was perceived, yet hid from mind and sight.
 The One only real shut itself from Space

SAVITRI

And stood aloof from the idea of Time.
 Its truth escaped from shape and line and hue.
 All else grew unsubstantial, self-annulled,
 This only everlasting seemed and true,
 Yet nowhere dwelt, it was outside the hours.
 This only could justify the labour of sight,
 But sight could not define for it a form;
 This only could appease the unsatisfied ear
 But hearing listened in vain for a missing sound;
 This answered not the sense, called not to Mind.
 It met her as the uncaught inaudible Voice
 That speaks for ever from the Unknowable.
 It met her like an omnipresent point
 Pure of dimensions, unfixed, invisible,
 The single oneness of its multiplied beat
 Accentuating its sole eternity.
 It faced her as some vast Nought's immensity,
 An endless No to all that seems to be,
 An endless Yes to things ever unconceived
 And all that is unimagined and unthought,
 An eternal zero or untotaled Aught,
 A spaceless and a placeless Infinite.
 Yet eternity and infinity seemed but words
 Vainly affixed by mind's incompetence
 To its stupendous lone reality.
 The world is but a spark-burst from its light,
 All moments flashes from its Timelessness,
 All objects glimmerings of the Bodiless
 That disappear from Mind when That is seen.
 It held, as if a shield before its face,
 A consciousness that saw without a seer,
 The Truth where knowledge is not nor knower nor known,
 The Love enamoured of its own delight
 In which the Lover is not nor the Beloved
 Bringing their personal passion into the Vast,
 The Force omnipotent in quietude,
 The Bliss that none can ever hope to taste.
 It cancelled the convincing cheat of self;
 A truth in nothingness was its mighty clue.
 If all existence could renounce to be

BOOK VII CANTO VI

And Being take refuge in Non-being's arms
 And Non-being could strike out its ciphered round,
 Some lustre of that Reality might appear.
 A formless liberation came on her.
 Once sepulchred alive in brain and flesh
 She had risen up from body, mind and life;
 She was no more a Person in a world,
 She had escaped into infinity.
 What once had been herself had disappeared;
 There was no frame of things, no figure of soul.
 A refugee from the domain of sense,
 Evading the necessity of thought,
 Delivered from Knowledge and from Ignorance
 And rescued from the true and the untrue,
 She shared the Superconscient's high retreat
 Beyond the self-born Word, the nude Idea,
 The first bare solid ground of consciousness;
 Beings were not there, existence had no place,
 There was no temptation of the joy to be.
 Unutterably effaced, no one and null,
 A vanishing vestige like a violet trace,
 A faint record merely of a self now past,
 She was a point in the unknowable.
 Only some last annulment now remained,
 Annihilation's vague indefinable step:
 A memory of being still was there
 And kept her separate from nothingness:
 She was in That but still became not That.
 This shadow of herself so close to nought
 Could be again self's point d'appui to live,
 Return out of the Inconceivable
 And be what some mysterious vast might choose.
 Even as the Unknowable decreed,
 She might be nought or new-become the All,
 Or if the omnipotent Nihil took a shape
 Emerge as someone and redeem the world.
 Even, she might learn what the mystic cipher held,
 This seeming exit or closed end of all
 Could be a blind tenebrous passage screened from sight,
 Her state the eclipsing shell of a darkened sun

SAVITRI

On its secret way to the Ineffable.
 Even now her splendid being might flame back
 Out of the silence and the nullity,
 A gleaming portion of the All-Wonderful,
 A power of some all-affirming Absolute,
 A shining mirror of the eternal Truth
 To show to the One-in-all its manifest face,
 To the souls of men their deep identity.
 Or she might wake into God's quietude
 Beyond the cosmic day and cosmic night
 And rest appeased in his white eternity.
 But this was now unreal or remote
 Or covered in the mystic fathomless blank.
 In infinite Nothingness was the ultimate sign
 Or else the Real was the Unknowable.
 A lonely Absolute negated all:
 It effaced the ignorant world from its solitude
 And drowned the soul in its everlasting peace.

CANTO SEVEN¹

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IN the little hermitage in the forest's heart,
 In the sunlight and the moonlight and the dark
 The daily human life went plodding on
 Even as before with its small unchanging works
 And its spare outward body of routine
 And happy quiet of ascetic peace.
 The old beauty smiled of the terrestrial scene;
 She too was her old gracious self to men.
 The Ancient Mother clutched her child to her breast
 Pressing her close in her environing arms,
 As if earth ever the same could for ever keep
 The living spirit and body in her clasp,
 As if death were not there nor end nor change.
 Accustomed only to read outward signs
 None saw aught new in her, none divined her state;
 They saw a person where was only God's vast,
 A still being or a mighty nothingness.
 To all she was the same perfect Savitri:
 A greatness and a sweetness and a light
 Poured out from her upon her little world.
 Life showed to all the same familiar face,
 Her acts followed the old unaltered round,
 She spoke the words that she was wont to speak
 And did the things that she had always done.
 Her eyes looked out on earth's unchanging face,
 Around her soul's muteness all moved as of old,
 A vacant consciousness watched from within
 Empty of all but bare Reality.
 There was no will behind the word and act,
 No thought formed in her brain to guide the speech:

¹ No title given by the Author

SAVITRI

An impersonal emptiness walked and spoke in her,
 Something perhaps unfelt, unseen, unknown
 Guarded the body for its future work,
 Or Nature moved in her old stream of force.
 Perhaps she bore made conscious in her breast
 The miraculous Nihil, origin of our souls
 And source and sum of the vast world's events,
 The womb and grave of thought, a cipher of God,
 A zero circle of being's totality.
 It used her speech and acted in her acts,
 It was beauty in her limbs, life in her breath;
 The original Mystery wore her human face.
 Thus was she lost within to separate self;
 Her mortal ego perished in God's night.
 Only a body was left, the ego's shell
 Afloat mid drift and foam of the world-sea,
 A sea of dream watched by a motionless sense
 In a figure of unreal reality.
 An impersonal foresight could already see,—
 In the unthinking knowledge of the spirit
 Even now it seemed nigh done, inevitable,—
 The individual die, the cosmos pass;
 These gone, the transcendental grew a myth,
 The Holy Ghost without the Father and Son,
 Or, a substratum of what once had been,
 Being that never willed to bear a world
 Restored to its original loneliness,
 Impassive, sole, silent, intangible.
 Yet all was not extinct in this deep loss;
 The being travelled not towards nothingness.
 There was some high surpassing Secrecy,
 And when she sat alone with Satyavan,
 Her moveless mind with his that searched and strove,
 In the hush of the profound and intimate night
 She turned to the face of a veiled voiceless Truth
 Hid in the dumb recesses of the heart
 Or waiting beyond the last peak climbed by Thought,—
 Unseen itself it sees the struggling world
 And prompts our quest, but cares not to be found,—
 Out of that distant Vast came a reply.

BOOK VII CANTO VII

Something unknown, unreachd, inscrutable
 Sent down the messages of its bodiless Light,
 Cast lightning flashes of a thought not ours,
 Crossing the immobile silence of her mind:
 In its might of irresponsible sovereignty
 It seized on speech to give those flamings shape,
 Made beat the heart of wisdom in a word
 And spoke immortal things through mortal lips.
 Or, listening to the sages of the woods,
 In question and in answer broke from her
 High strange revealings impossible to men,
 Something or someone secret and remote
 Took hold of her body for his mystic use,
 Her mouth was seized to channel ineffable truths,
 Knowledge unthinkable found an utterance.
 Astonished by a new enlightenment,
 Invaded by a streak of the Absolute,
 They marvelled at her, for she seemed to know
 What they had only glimpsed at times afar.
 These thoughts were formed not in her listening brain,
 Her vacant heart was like a stringless harp;
 Impassive the body claimed not its own voice,
 But let the luminous greatness through it pass.
 A dual Power at being's occult poles
 Still acted, nameless and invisible:
 Her divine emptiness was their instrument.
 Inconscient Nature dealt with the world it had made,
 And using still the body's instruments
 Slipped through the conscious void she had become;
 The superconscient Mystery through that Void
 Missioned its word to touch the thoughts of men.
 As yet this great impersonal speech was rare.
 But now the unmoving wide spiritual space
 In which her mind survived tranquil and bare,
 Admitted a traveller from the cosmic breadths:
 A thought came through draped as an outer voice.
 It called not for the witness of the mind,
 It spoke not to the hushed receiving heart;
 It came direct to the pure perception's seat,
 An only centre now of consciousness,

SAVITRI

If centre could be where all seemed only space;
 No more shut in by body's walls and gates,
 Her being a circle without circumference
 Already now surpassed all cosmic bounds
 And more and more spread into infinity.
 This being was its own unbounded world,
 A world without form or feature or circumstance,
 It had no ground, no wall, no roof of thought,
 Yet saw itself and looked on all around
 In a silence motionless and illimitable.
 There was no person there, no centred mind,
 No seat of feeling on which beat events
 Or objects wrought and shaped reaction's stress.
 There was no motion in this inner world,
 All was a still and even infinity.
 In her the Unseen, the Unknown waited his hour.

But now she sat by sleeping Satyavan¹
 Awake within, and the enormous Night
 Surrounded her with the Unknowable's vast.
 A voice began to speak from her own heart
 That was not hers, yet mastered thought and sense.
 As it spoke all changed within her and without;
 All was, all lived; she felt all being one;
 The world of unreality ceased to be:
 There was no more a universe built by mind,
 Convicted as a structure or a sign;
 A spirit, a being saw created things
 And cast itself into unnumbered forms
 And was what it saw and made; all now became
 An evidence of one stupendous truth,
 A Truth in which negation had no place,
 A being and a living consciousness,
 A stark and absolute Reality.
 There the unreal could not find a place,
 The sense of unreality was slain:
 There all was conscious, made of the Infinite,
 All had a substance of Eternity.

¹ Alternative version

BOOK VII CANTO VII

Yet this was the same Indecipherable;
 It seemed to cast from it universe like a dream
 Vanishing for ever into an original Void.
 But this was no more some vague ubiquitous point
 Or a cipher of vastness in unreal Nought.
 It was the same but now no more seemed far
 To the living clasp of her recovered soul.
 It was her self, it was the self of all,
 It was the reality of existing things,
 It was the consciousness of all that lived
 And felt and saw; it was Timelessness and Time,
 It was the Bliss of formlessness and form.
 It was all Love and the one Beloved's arms,
 It was sight and thought in one all-seeing Mind,
 It was joy of being on the peaks of God.
 She passed beyond Time into eternity,
 Slipped out of space and became the Infinite;
 Her being rose into unreachable heights
 And found no end of its journey in the Self.
 It plunged into the unfathomable deeps
 And found no end to the silent mystery
 That held all world within one lonely breast,
 Yet harboured all creation's multitudes.
 She was all vastness and one measureless point,
 She was a height beyond heights, a depth beyond depths,
 She lived in the everlasting and was all
 That harbours death and bears the wheeling hours.
 All contraries were true in one huge spirit
 Surpassing measure, change and circumstance.
 An individual, one with cosmic self
 In the heart of the Transcendent's miracle
 And the secret of World-personality
 Was the creator and the lord of all.
 Mind was a single innumerable look
 Upon himself and all that he became,
 Life was his drama and the Vast a stage,
 The universe was his body, God its soul.
 All was one single immense reality,
 All its innumerable phenomenon.

SAVITRI

Her spirit saw the world as living God;
 It saw the One and knew that all was He.
 She knew him as the Absolute's self-space,
 One with her self and ground of all things here
 In which the world wanders seeking for the Truth
 Guarded behind its face of ignorance:
 She followed him through the march of endless Time.
 All Nature's happenings were events in her,
 The heart-beats of the cosmos were her own,
 All beings thought and felt and moved in her;
 She inhabited the vastness of the world,
 Its distances were her nature's boundaries,
 Its closenesses her own life's intimacies.
 Her mind became familiar with its mind,
 Its body was her body's larger frame
 In which she lived and knew herself in it
 One, multitudinous in its multitudes.
 She was a single being, yet all things;
 The world was her spirit's wide circumference,
 The thoughts of others were her intimates,
 Their feelings close to her universal heart,
 Their bodies her many bodies kin to her;
 She was no more herself but all the world.
 Out of the infinitudes all came to her,
 Into the infinitudes sentient she spread,
 Infinity was her own natural home.
 Nowhere she dwelt, her spirit was everywhere,
 The distant constellations wheeled round her;
 Earth saw her born, all worlds were her colonies,
 The greater worlds of life and mind were hers;
 All Nature reproduced her in its lines,
 Its movements were large copies of her own.
 She was the single self of all these selves,
 She was in them and they were all in her.
 This first was an immense identity
 In which her own identity was lost:
 What seemed herself was an image of the Whole.
 She was a subconscious life of tree and flower,
 The outbreak of the honied buds of spring;
 She burned in the passion and splendour of the rose,

BOOK VII CANTO VII

She was the red heart of the passion flower,
The dream-white of the lotus in its pool.
Out of subconscious life she climbed to mind,
She was thought and the passion of the world's heart,
She was the godhead hid in the heart of man,
She was the climbing of his soul to God.
The cosmos flowered in her, she was its bed.
She was Time and the dreams of God in Time;
She was Space and the wideness of his days.
From this she rose where Time and Space were not;
The superconscious was her native air,
Infinity was her movement's natural space;
Eternity looked out from her on Time.

END OF BOOK SEVEN

BOOK EIGHT
The Book of Death

CANTO THREE*

DEATH IN THE FOREST

NOW it was here in this great golden dawn
 By her still sleeping husband lain she gazed
 Into her past as one about to die
 Looks back upon the sunlit fields of life
 Where he too ran and sported with the rest,
 Lifting his head above the huge dark stream
 Into whose depths he must for ever plunge.
 All she had been and done she lived again.
 The whole year in a swift and eddying race
 Of memories swept through her and fled away
 Into the irrecoverable past.
 Then silently she rose and, service done,
 Bowed down to the great goddess simply carved
 By Satyavan upon a forest stone.
 What prayer she breathed her soul and Doorga knew.
 Perhaps she felt in the dim forest huge
 The infinite Mother watching over her child,
 Perhaps the shrouded Voice spoke some still word.
 At last she came to the pale mother queen.
 She spoke but with guarded lips and tranquil face
 As some stray word or some betraying look
 Should let pass into the mother's unknowing breast
 Slaying all happiness and need to live
 A dire foreknowledge of the grief to come.
 Only the needed utterance passage found:
 All else she pressed back into her anguished heart
 And forced upon her speech an outward peace:

* This Book was not completed. This Canto which the author named Canto III was compiled by him from his original version and rewritten at places.

SAVITRI

"One year that I have lived with Satyavan
 Here on the emerald edge of the vast woods,
 In the iron ring of the enormous peaks
 Under the blue rifts of the forest sky,
 I have not gone into the silences
 Of this great woodland that enringed my thoughts
 With mystery, nor in its green miracles
 Wandered, but this small clearing was my world.
 Now has a strong desire seized all my heart
 To go with Satyavan holding his hand
 Into the life that he has loved and touch
 Herbs he has trod and know the forest flowers
 And hear at ease the birds and the scurrying life
 That starts and ceases, rich far rustle of boughs
 And all the mystic whispering of the woods.
 Release me now and let my heart have rest."
 She answered: "Do as thy wise mind desires,
 O calm child-sovereign with the eyes that rule.
 I hold thee for a strong goddess who has come
 Pitying our barren days; so dost thou serve
 Even as a slave might, yet art thou beyond
 All that thou doest, all our minds conceive,
 Like the strong sun that serves earth from above."
 Then the doomed husband and the woman who knew
 Went with linked hands into that solemn world
 Where beauty and grandeur and unspoken dream,
 Where Nature's mystic silence could be felt
 Communing with the secrecy of God.
 Beside her Satyavan walked full of joy,
 Because she moved with him through his green haunts:
 He showed her all the forest's riches, flowers
 Innumerable of every odour and hue
 And soft thick clinging creepers red and green
 And strange rich-plumaged birds, to every cry
 That haunted sweetly distant boughs, replied
 With the shrill singer's name more sweetly called.
 He spoke of all the things he loved: they were
 His boyhood's comrades and his playfellows,
 Coevals and companions of his life
 Here in this world whose every mood he knew:

Their thoughts which to the common mind are blank
 He shared, to every wild emotion felt
 An answer. Deeply she listened, but to hear
 The voice that soon would cease from tender words
 And treasure its sweet cadences beloved
 For lonely memory when none by her walked
 And the beloved voice could speak no more.
 But little dwelt her mind upon their sense;
 Of death, not life she thought or life's lone end.
 Love in her bosom hurt with jagged edges
 Of anguish meaned at every step with pain
 Crying, "Now, now perhaps his voice will cease
 For ever." Even by some vague touch oppressed,
 Sometimes her eyes looked round as if their orbs
 Might see the dim and dreadful god's approach.
 But Satyavan had paused. He meant to finish
 His labour here that happy, linked, uncaring
 They two might wander free in the green deep
 Primeval mystery of the forest's heart.
 Wordless but near she watched, no turn to lose
 Of the bright face and body which she loved.
 Her life was now in seconds, not in hours,
 And every moment she economised
 Like a pale merchant leaned above his store,
 The miser of his poor remaining gold.
 But Satyavan wielded a joyous axe.
 He sang high snatches of a sage's chant
 That pealed of conquered death and demons slain,
 And sometimes paused to cry to her sweet speech
 Of love and mockery tenderer than love:
 She like a pantheress leaped upon his words
 And carried them into her cavern heart.
 But as he worked, his doom upon him came.
 The violent and hungry hounds of pain
 Travelled through his body biting as they passed
 Silently, and all his suffering breath besieged
 Strove to rend life's strong heart-cords and be free.
 Then helped, as if a beast had left its prey,
 A moment in a wave of rich relief
 Reborn to strength and happy ease he stood

SAVITRI

Rejoicing and resumed his confident toil
 But with less seeing strokes. Now the great Woodsman
 Hewed at him and his labour ceased: lifting
 His arm he flung away the poignant axe
 Far from him like an instrument of pain.
 She came to him in silent anguish and clasped,
 And he cried to her, "Savitri, a pang
 Cleaves through my head and breast as if the axe
 Were piercing it and not the living branch.
 Such agony rends me as the tree must feel
 When it is sundered and must lose its life.
 Awhile let me lay my head upon thy lap
 And guard me with thy hands from evil fate:
 Perhaps because thou touchest, death may pass."
 Then Savitri sat under branches wide,
 Cool, green against the sun, not the hurt tree
 Which his keen axe had cloven,—that she shunned;
 But leaned beneath a fortunate kingly trunk
 She guarded him in her bosom and strove to soothe
 His anguished brow and body with her hands.
 All grief and fear were dead within her now
 And a great calm had fallen. The wish to lessen
 His suffering, the impulse that opposes pain
 Were the one mortal feeling left. It passed:
 Griefless and strong she waited like the gods.
 But now his sweet familiar hue was changed
 Into a tarnished greyness and his eyes
 Dimmed over, forsaken of the clear light she loved.
 Only the dull and physical mind was left,
 Vacant of the bright spirit's luminous gaze.
 But once before it faded wholly back,
 He cried out in a clinging last despair,
 "Savitri, Savitri, O Savitri,
 Lean down, my soul, and kiss me while I die."
 And even as her pallid lips pressed his,
 His failed, losing last sweetness of response;
 His cheek pressed down her golden arm. She sought
 His mouth still with her living mouth, as if
 She could persuade his soul back with her kiss;
 Then grew aware they were no more alone.

BOOK VIII CANTO III

Something had come there conscious, vast and dire.
 Near her she felt a silent shade immense
 Chilling the noon with darkness for its back.
 An awful hush had fallen upon the place:
 There was no cry of birds, no voice of beasts.
 A terror and an anguish filled the world,
 As if annihilation's mystery
 Had taken a sensible form. A cosmic mind
 Looked out on all from formidable eyes
 Contemning all with his unbearable gaze
 And with immortal lips and a vast brow
 It saw in its immense destroying thought
 All things and beings as a pitiful dream,
 Rejecting with calm disdain Nature's delight,
 The wordless meaning of its deep regard
 Voicing the unreality of things
 And life that would be for ever but never was
 And its brief and vain recurrence without cease,
 As if from a Silence without form or name
 The Shadow of a remote uncaring god
 Doomed to his Naught illusory universe,
 Cancelling its show of idea and act in Time
 And its imitation of eternity.
 She knew that visible Death was standing there
 And Satyavan had passed from her embrace.

END OF BOOK EIGHT

PART THREE

(Books IX-XII)



BOOK NINE

The Book of Eternal Night



CANTO ONE

TOWARDS THE BLACK VOID

SO was she left alone in the huge wood,
 Surrounded by a dim unthinking world,
 Her husband's corpse on her forsaken breast.
 She measured not her loss with helpless thoughts,
 Nor rent with tears the marble seals of pain:
 She rose not yet to face the dreadful god.
 Over the body she loved her soul leaned out
 In a great stillness without stir or voice,
 As if her mind had died with Satyavan.
 But still the human heart in her beat on.
 Aware still of his being near to hers,
 Closely she clasped to her the mute lifeless form
 As though to guard the oneness they had been
 And keep the spirit still within the frame.
 Then suddenly there came on her the change
 Which in tremendous moments of our lives
 Can overtake sometimes the human soul
 And hold it up towards its luminous source.
 The veil is torn, the thinker is no more:
 Only the spirit sees and all is known.
 Then a calm Power seated above our brows
 Is seen, unshaken by our thoughts and deeds,
 Its stillness bears the voices of the world:
 Immobile, it moves Nature, looks on life.
 It shapes immutably its far-seen ends;
 Untouched and tranquil amid error and tears
 And measureless above our striving wills,
 Its gaze controls the turbulent whirl of things.
 To mate with the Glory it sees, the spirit grows:
 The voice of life is tuned to infinite sounds,

SAVITRI

The moments on great wings of lightning come
 And godlike thoughts surprise the mind of earth.
 Into the soul's splendour and intensity
 A crescent of miraculous birth is tossed,
 Whose horn of mystery floats in a bright void
 As into a heaven of strength and silence, thought
 Is ravished; all this living mortal clay
 Is seized and in a swift and fiery flood
 Of touches shaped by a Harmonist unseen.
 A new sight comes, new voices in us form
 A body of the music of the gods.
 Immortal yearnings without name leap down,
 Large quiverings of godhead seeking run
 And weave upon a puissant field of calm
 A high and lonely ecstasy of will.
 This in a moment's depths was born in her.
 Now to the limitless gaze disclosed that sees
 Things barred from human thinking's earthly lids,
 The Spirit who had hidden in nature soared
 Out of his luminous nest within the worlds.
 Like a vast fire it climbed the skies of night.
 Thus were the cords of self-oblivion torn.
 Like one who looks up to far heights she saw,
 Ancient and strong as on a windless summit
 Above her where she had worked in her lone mind
 Labouring apart in a sole tower of self,
 The source of all which she had seemed or wrought,
 A power projected into cosmic space,
 A slow embodiment of the aeonic will,
 A starry fragment of the eternal Truth,
 The passionate instrument of an unmoved Power.
 A Presence was there that filled the listening world,
 A central All assumed her boundless life.
 A sovereignty, a silence and a swiftness,
 One brooded over abysses who was she.
 As in a choric robe of unheard sounds
 A force descended trailing endless lights;
 Linking Time's seconds to Infinity,
 Illimitably it girt the earth and her:
 It sank into her soul and she was changed.

BOOK IX CANTO I

Then like a thought fulfilled by some great word
 That mightiness assumed a symbol form;
 Her being's spaces quivered with its touch,
 It covered her as with immortal wings;
 On its lips the curve of the unuttered Truth,
 A halo of Wisdom's lightnings for its crown,
 It entered the mystic lotus in her head,
 A thousand-petalled home of power and light.
 Immortal leader of her mortality,
 Doer of her works and fountain of her words,
 Invulnerable by Time, omnipotent,
 It stood above her calm, immobile, mute.

All in her mated with that mighty hour,
 As if the last remnant had been slain by Death
 Of the humanity that once was hers.
 Assuming a spiritual wide control,
 Making life's sea a mirror of heaven's sky,
 The young divinity in her earthly limbs
 Filled with celestial strength her mortal part.
 Over was the haunted pain, the rending fear:
 Her grief had passed away, her mind was still,
 Her heart beat quietly with a sovereign force.
 There came a freedom from the heart-strings' clutch,
 Now all her acts sprang from a godhead's calm.
 Calmly she laid upon the forest soil
 The dead who still reposed upon her breast
 And bore to turn away from the dead form:
 Sole now she rose to meet the dreadful god.
 That mightier spirit turned its mastering gaze
 On life and things, inheritor of a work
 Left to it unfinished from her halting past,
 When yet the mind, a passionate learner, toiled
 And ill-shaped instruments were crudely moved.
 Transcended now was the poor human rule;
 A sovereign power was there, a godlike will.
 A moment yet she lingered motionless
 And looked down on the dead man at her feet;
 Then like a tree recovering from a wind
 She raised her noble head; fronting her gaze

SAVITRI

Something stood there, unearthly, sombre, grand,
 A limitless denial of all being
 That wore the terror and wonder of a shape.
 In its appalling eyes the tenebrous Form
 Bore the deep pity of destroying gods.
 A sorrowful irony curved the dreadful lips
 That speak the word of doom. Eternal Night,
 In the dire beauty of an immortal face,
 Pitying arose, receiving all that lives
 For ever into its fathomless heart, refuge
 Of creatures from their anguish and world-pain.
 His shape was nothingness made real, his limbs
 Were monuments of transience and beneath
 Brows of unwearying calm large godlike lids
 Silent beheld the writhing serpent, life.
 Unmoved their timeless wide unchanging gaze
 Had seen the unprofitable cycles pass,
 Survived the passing of unnumbered stars
 And sheltered still the same immutable orbs.
 The two opposed each other with their eyes,
 Woman and universal god: around her,
 Piling their void unbearable loneliness
 Upon her mighty uncompanioned soul,
 Many inhuman solitudes came close.
 Vacant eternities forbidding hope
 Laid upon her their huge and lifeless look,
 And to her ears silencing earthly sounds,
 A sad and formidable voice arose
 Which seemed the whole adverse world's. "Unclasp", it cried,
 "Thy passionate influence and relax, O slave
 Of Nature, changing tool of changeless Law,
 Who vainly writhst rebellion to my yoke,
 Thy elemental grasp; weep and forget.
 Entomb thy passion in its living grave.
 Leave now the once-loved spirit's abandoned robe:
 Pass lonely back to thy vain life on earth."
 It ceased, she moved not and it spoke again,
 Lowering its mighty key to human chords,—
 Yet a dread cry behind the uttered sounds,
 Echoing all sadness and immortal scorn,

BOOK IX CANTO I

Moaned like a hunger of far wandering waves.
 "Wilt thou for ever keep thy passionate hold,
 Thyself, a creature doomed like him to pass,
 Denying his soul death's calm and silent rest?
 Relax thy grasp; this body is earth's and thine,
 His spirit now belongs to a greater power.
 Woman, thy husband suffers." Savitri
 Drew back her heart's force that clasped his body still
 Where from her lap renounced on the smooth grass
 Softly it lay, as often before in sleep
 When from their couch she rose in the white dawn
 Called by her daily tasks: now too as if called
 She rose and stood gathered in lonely strength,
 Like one who drops his mantle for a race
 And waits the signal, motionlessly swift.
 She knew not to what course: her spirit above
 On the crypt-summit of her secret form
 Like one left sentinel on a mountain crest.
 A fiery-footed splendour puissant-winged
 Watched flaming-silent with her voiceless soul
 Like a still sail upon a windless sea.
 White passionless it rode, an anchored might,
 Waiting what far-ridged impulse should arise
 Out of the eternal depths and cast its surge.
 Then Death, the king, leaned boundless down, as leans
 Night over tired lands when evening pales
 And fading gleams break down the horizon's walls,
 Nor yet the dusk grows mystic with the moon.
 The dim and awful godhead rose erect
 From his brief stooping to his touch on earth,
 And like a dream that wakes out of a dream,
 Forsaking the poor mould of that dead clay,
 Another luminous Satyavan arose,
 Starting upright from the recumbent earth
 As if someone over viewless borders stepped
 Emerging on the edge of unseen worlds.
 In the earth's day the silent marvel stood
 Between the mortal woman and the god.
 Such seemed he as if one departed came
 Wearing the light of a celestial shape

SAVITRI

Splendidly alien to the mortal air.
 The mind sought things long loved and fell back foiled
 From unfamiliar hues, beheld yet longed,
 By the sweet radiant form unsatisfied,
 Incredulous of its too bright hints of heaven;
 Too strange the brilliant phantasm to life's clasp
 Desiring the warm creations of the earth
 Reared in the ardour of material suns,
 The senses seized in vain a glorious shade:
 Only the spirit knew the spirit still,
 And the heart divined the old loved heart, though changed.
 Between two realms he stood, not wavering,
 But fixed in quiet strong expectancy,
 Like one who, sightless, listens for a command.
 So were they immobile on that earthly field,
 Powers not of earth, though one in human clay.
 On either side of one two spirits strove;
 Silence battled with silence, vast with vast.
 But now the impulse of the Path was felt
 Moving from the Silence that supports the stars
 To touch the confines of the visible world.
 Luminous he moved away; behind him Death
 Went slowly with his noiseless tread, as seen
 In dream-built fields a shadowy herdsman glides
 Behind some wanderer from his voiceless herds,
 And Savitri moved behind eternal Death,
 Her mortal pace was equalled with the god's.
 Wordless she travelled in her lover's steps,
 Planting her human feet where his had trod,
 Into the perilous silences beyond.

At first in a blind stress of woods she moved
 With strange inhuman paces on the soil,
 Journeying as if upon an unseen road.
 Around her on the green and imaged earth
 The flickering screen of forests ringed her steps.
 Its thick luxurious obstacle of boughs
 Besieged her body pressing dimly through
 In a rich realm of whispers palpable,
 And all the murmurous beauty of the leaves

BOOK IX CANTO I

Rippled around her like an emerald robe.
 But more and more this grew an alien sound,
 And her old intimate body seemed to her
 A burden which her being remotely bore.
 Herself lived far in some uplifted scene
 Where to the trance-chained vision of pursuit,
 Sole presences in a high spaceless dream,
 The luminous spirit glided stilly on
 And the great shadow travelled vague behind.
 Still with an amorous crowd of seeking hands
 Softly entreated by their old desires
 Her senses felt earth's close and gentle air
 Cling round them and in troubled branches knew
 Uncertain treadings of a faint-foot wind:
 She bore dim fragrances, far callings touched;
 The wild bird's voice and its winged rustle came
 As if a sigh from some forgotten world.
 Earth stood aloof, yet near: round her it wove
 Its sweetness and its greenness and delight,
 Its brilliance suave of well-loved vivid hues,
 Sunlight arriving to its golden noon,
 And the blue heavens and the caressing soil.
 The ancient Mother offered to her child
 Her simple world of kind familiar things.
 But now as if the body's sensuous hold
 Curbing the godhead of her infinite walk
 Had freed those spirits to their grander road
 Across some boundary's intangible bar,
 The silent god grew mighty and remote
 In other spaces and the soul she loved
 Lost its consenting nearness to her life.
 Into a deep and unfamiliar air
 Enormous, windless, without stir or sound
 They seemed to enlarge away, drawn by some wide
 Pale distance, from the warm control of earth
 And her grown far. Now, now they would escape.
 Then flaming from her body's nest, alarmed,
 Her violent spirit soared at Satyavan.
 Out mid the plunge of heaven-surrounded rocks
 So in a terror and a wrath divine

SAVITRI

From her eyrie streams against the ascending death,
 Indignant at its crouching point of steel,
 A fierce she-eagle threatened in her brood,
 Borne on a rush of puissance and a cry,
 Outwinging like a mass of golden fire.
 So on a spirit's flaming outrush borne
 She crossed the borders of dividing sense;
 Like pale discarded sheaths dropped dully down
 Her mortal members fell back from her soul.
 A moment of a secret body's sleep,
 Her trance knew not of sun or earth or world;
 Thought, time and death were absent from her grasp:
 She knew not self, forgotten was Savitri.
 All was the violent ocean of a will
 Where lived captive to an immense caress,
 Possessed in a supreme identity,
 Her aim, joy, origin, Satyavan alone.
 Her sovereign prisoned in her being's core,
 He beat there like a rhythmic heart,—herself
 But different still, one loved, enveloped, clasped,
 A treasure saved from the collapse of space.
 Around him nameless, infinite she surged,
 Her spirit fulfilled in his spirit, rich with all Time,
 As if Love's deathless moment had been found,
 A pearl within eternity's white shell.
 Then out of the engulfing sea of trance
 Her mind rose drenched to light streaming with hues
 Of vision and, awake once more to Time,
 Returned to shape the lineaments of things
 And live in borders of the seen and known.
 Onward the three still moved in her soul-scene.
 As if pacing through fragments of a dream,
 She seemed to travel on, a visioned shape,
 Imagining other musers like herself,
 By them imagined in their lonely sleep.
 Ungrasped, unreal, yet familiar, old,
 Like clefts of unsubstantial memory,
 Scenes often traversed, never lived in, fled
 Past her unheeding to forgotten goals.
 In voiceless regions they were travellers

BOOK IX CANTO I

Alone in a new world where souls were not,
 But only living moods. A strange, hushed, weird
 Country was round them, strange far skies above,
 A doubting space where dreaming objects lived
 Within themselves their own unchanged idea.
 Weird were the grasses, weird the treeless plains,
 Weird ran the road which like fear hastening
 Towards that of which it has most terror, passed
 Phantasmal between pillared conscious rocks
 Sombre and high, gates brooding, whose stone thoughts
 Lost their huge sense beyond in giant night.
 Enigma of the Inconscient's sculptural sleep,
 Symbols of the approach to darkness old
 And monuments of her titanic reign,
 Opening to depths like dumb appalling jaws
 That wait a traveller down a haunted path
 Attracted to a mystery that slays,
 They watched across her road, cruel and still;
 Sentinels they stood of dumb Necessity,
 Mute heads of vigilant and sullen gloom,
 Carved muzzle of a dim enormous world.
 Then to that chill sere heavy line arrived
 Where his feet touched the shadowy marches' brink,
 Turning arrested luminous Satyavan
 Looked back with his wonderful eyes at Savitri.
 But Death pealed forth his vast abysmal cry:
 "O mortal, turn back to thy transient kind;
 Aspire not to accompany Death to his home,
 As if thy breath could live where Time must die.
 Think not thy mind-born passion strength from heaven
 To uplift thy spirit from its earthly base
 And, breaking out from the material cage,
 To upbuey thy feet of dream in groundless Nought
 And bear thee through the pathless infinite.
 Only in human limits man lives safe.
 Trust not in the unreal Lords of Time,
 Immortal deeming this image of thyself
 Which they have built on a dream's floating ground.
 Let not the dreadful goddess move thy soul
 To enlarge thy vehement trespass into worlds

SAVITRI

Where it shall perish like a helpless thought.
 Know the cold term-stones of thy hopes in life.
 Armed vainly with the Idea's borrowed might
 Dare not to outstep man's bound and measured force.
 Ignorant and stumbling, in brief boundaries pent,
 He crowns himself the world's mock sovereign
 Tormenting Nature with the works of Mind.
 O sleeper dreaming of divinity,
 Wake trembling mid the indifferent silences
 In which thy few weak chords of being die.
 Impermanent creatures, sorrowful foam of Time,
 Your transient loves bind not the eternal gods."
 The dread voice ebbed in the consenting hush
 Which seemed to close upon it, wide, intense,
 A wordless sanction from the jaws of Night.
 The Woman answered not. Her high nude soul,
 Stripped of the girdle of mortality,
 Against fixed destiny and the grooves of law
 Stood up in its sheer will a primal force.
 Still like a statue on its pedestal,
 Lone in the silence and to vastness bared,
 Against midnight's dumb abysses piled in front
 A columned shaft of fire and light she rose.

CANTO TWO

THE JOURNEY IN ETERNAL NIGHT AND
THE VOICE OF THE DARKNESS

A WHILE on the chill dreadful edge of Night
 All stood as if a world were doomed to die
 And waited on the eternal silence' brink.
 Heaven leaned towards them like a cloudy brow
 Of menace through the dim and voiceless hush.
 As thoughts stand mute on a despairing verge
 Where the last depths plunge into nothingness
 And the last dreams must end, they paused; in their front
 Were glooms like shadowy wings, behind them pale
 The lifeless evening was a dead man's gaze.
 Hungry beyond, the night desired her soul.
 But still in its lone niche of templed strength
 Motionless, her flame-bright spirit, mute, erect,
 Burned like a torch-fire from a windowed room
 Pointing against the darkness' sombre breast.
 The Woman first affronted the Abyss
 Daring to journey through the eternal Night.
 Armoured with light she advanced her foot to plunge
 Into the dread and hueless vacancy;
 Immortal, unappalled her spirit faced
 The danger of the ruthless eyeless waste.
 Against night's inky ground they stirred, moulding
 Mysterious motion on her human tread,
 A swimming action and a drifting march
 Like figures moving before eyelids closed:
 All as in dreams went slipping, gliding on.
 The rock-gate's heavy walls were left behind;
 As if through passages of receding time
 The present and past into the Timeless lapsed;

SAVITRI

Arrested upon dim adventure's brink,
 The future ended drowned in nothingness.
 Amid collapsing shapes they wound obscure;
 The fading vestibules of a tenebrous world
 Received them, where they seemed to move and yet
 Be still, nowhere advancing yet to pass,
 A dumb procession a dim picture bounds,
 Not conscious forms threading a real scene.
 A mystery of terror's boundlessness,
 Gathering its hungry strength the huge pitiless void
 Surrounded slowly with its soundless depths,
 And monstrous, cavernous, a shapeless throat
 Devoured her into its shadowy strangling mass,
 The fierce spiritual agony of a dream.
 A curtain of impenetrable dread,
 The darkness hung around her cage of sense
 As when the trees have turned to blotted shades
 And the last friendly glimmer fades away,
 Around a bullock in the forest tied
 By hunters closes in no empty night.
 The thought that strives in the world was here unmade;
 Its effort it renounced to live and know,
 Convinced at last that it had never been;
 It perished, all its dream of action done:
 This clotted cypher was its dark result.
 In the smothering stress of this stupendous Nought
 Mind could not think, breath could not breathe, the soul
 Could not remember or feel itself; it seemed
 A hollow gulf of sterile emptiness,
 A zero oblivious of the sum it closed,
 An abnegation of the Maker's joy
 Saved by no wide repose, no depth of peace.
 On all that claims here to be Truth and God
 And conscious self and the revealing Word
 And the creative rapture of the Mind
 And Love and Knowledge and heart's delight, there fell
 The immense refusal of the eternal No.
 As disappears a golden lamp in gloom
 Borne into distance from the eye's desire,
 Into the shadows vanished Savitri.

BOOK IX CANTO II

There was no course, no path, no end or goal:
 Visionless she moved amid insensible gulfs,
 Or drove through some great black unknowing Waste
 Or whirled in a dumb eddy of meeting winds
 Assembled by the titan hands of Chance.
 There was none with her in the dreadful Vast:
 She saw no more the vague tremendous god,
 Her eyes had lost their luminous Satyavan.
 Yet not for this her spirit failed, but held
 More deeply than the bounded senses can
 Which grasp externally and find to lose
 Its object loved. So when on earth they lived
 She had felt him straying through the glades, the glades
 A scene in her, its clefts her being's vistas
 Opening their secrets to his search and joy,
 Because to jealous sweetness in her heart
 Whatever happy space his cherished feet
 Preferred, must be at once her soul embracing
 His body, passioning dumbly to his tread.
 But now a silent gulf between them came
 And to abysmal loneliness she fell,
 Even from herself cast out, from love remote.
 Long hours, since long it seems when sluggish time
 Is measured by the throbs of the soul's pain,
 In an unreal darkness empty and drear
 She travelled treading on the corpse of life,
 Lost in a blindness of extinguished souls.
 Solitary in the anguish of the void
 She lived in spite of death, she conquered still;
 In vain her puissant being was oppressed:
 Her heavy long monotony of pain
 Tardily of its fierce self-torture tired.
 At first a faint inextinguishable gleam,
 Pale but immortal, flickered in the gloom
 As if a memory came to spirits dead,
 A memory that wished to live again,
 Dissolved from mind in Nature's natal sleep.
 It wandered like a lost ray of the moon
 Revealing to the night her soul of dread;
 Serpentine in the gleam the darkness lolled,

SAVITRI

Its black hoods jewelled with the mystic glow;
 Its dull sleek folds shrank back and coiled and slid,
 As though they felt all light a cruel pain
 And suffered from the pale approach of hope.
 Night felt assailed her heavy sombre reign;
 The splendour of some bright eternity
 Threatened with this faint beam of wandering Truth
 Her empire of the everlasting Nought.
 Implacable in her intolerant strength
 And confident that she alone was true,
 She strove to stifle the frail dangerous ray;
 Aware of an all-negating immensity
 She reared her giant head of Nothingness,
 Her mouth of darkness swallowing all that is;
 She saw in herself the tenebrous Absolute.
 But still the light prevailed and still it grew,
 And Savitri to her lost self awoke;
 Her limbs refused the cold embrace of death,
 Her heart-beats triumphed in the grasp of pain;
 Her soul persisted claiming for its joy
 The soul of the beloved now seen no more.
 Before her in the stillness of the world
 Once more she heard the treading of a god,
 And out of the dumb darkness Satyavan,
 Her husband, grew into a luminous shade.
 Then a sound pealed through that dead monstrous realm:
 Vast like the surge in a tired swimmer's ears,
 Clamouring, a fatal iron-hearted roar,
 Death missioned to the night his lethal call.
 "This is my silent dark immensity,
 This is the home of everlasting Night,
 This is the secrecy of Nothingness
 Entombing the vanity of life's desires.
 Hast thou beheld thy source, O transient heart,
 And known from what the dream thou art was made?
 In this stark sincerity of nude emptiness
 Hopest thou still always to last and love?"
 The Woman answered not. Her spirit refused
 The voice of the Night that knew and Death that thought.
 In her beginningless infinity

BOOK IX CANTO II

Through her soul's reaches unconfined she gazed;
 She saw the undying fountains of her life,
 She knew herself eternal without birth.
 But still opposing her with endless night
 Death, the dire god, inflicted on her eyes
 The immortal calm of his tremendous gaze:
 "Although thou hast survived the unborn void
 Which never shall forgive, while Time endures,
 The primal violence that fashioned thought,
 Forcing the immobile Vast to suffer and live
 This sorrowful victory only hast thou won
 To live for a little without Satyavan.
 What shall the ancient goddess give to thee
 Who helps thy heart-beats? Only she prolongs
 The nothing dreamed existence and delays
 With the labour of living thy eternal sleep.
 A fragile miracle of thinking clay,
 Armed with illusions walks the child of Time.
 To fill the void around he feels and dreads,
 The void he came from and to which he goes,
 He magnifies his self and names it God.
 He calls the heavens to help his suffering hopes.
 He sees above him with a longing heart
 Bare spaces more unconscious than himself
 That have not even his privilege of mind
 And empty of all but their unreal blue
 And peoples them with bright and merciful powers.
 For the sea roars around him and earth quakes
 Beneath his steps, and fire is at his doors,
 And death prowls baying through the woods of life.
 Moved by the Presences with which he yearns,
 He offers in implacable shrines his soul
 And clothes all with the beauty of his dreams.
 The gods who watch the earth with sleepless eyes
 And guide its giant stumblings through the void,
 Have given to man the burden of his mind;
 In his unwilling heart they have lit their fires
 And sown in it incurable unrest.
 His mind is a hunter upon tracks unknown;
 Amusing Time with vain discovery,

SAVITRI

He deepens with thought the mystery of his fate
 And turns to song his laughter and his tears.
 His mortality vexing with the immortal's dreams,
 Troubling his transience with the infinite's breath
 They gave him hungers which no food can fill;
 He is the cattle of the shepherd gods.
 His body the tether with which he is tied,
 They cast for fodder grief and hope and joy:
 His pasture ground they have fenced with Ignorance.
 Into his fragile undefended breast
 They have breathed a courage that is met by death,
 They have given a wisdom that is mocked by night,
 They have traced a journey that foresees no goal.
 Aimless man toils in an uncertain world
 Lulled by inconstant pauses of his pain,
 Scourged like a beast by the infinite desire,
 Bound to the chariot of the dreadful gods.
 But if thou still canst hope and still wouldst love,
 Return to thy body's shell they tie to earth,
 And with thy heart's little remnants try to live.
 Hope not to win back to thee Satyavan.
 Yet since thy strength deserves no trivial crown,
 Gifts I can give to soothe thy wounded life.
 The pacts which transient beings make with fate,
 And the wayside sweetness earth-bound hearts would pluck,
 These if thy will accepts make freely thine.
 Choose a life's hopes for thy deceiving prize."
 As ceased the ruthless and tremendous Voice,
 Unendingly there rose in Savitri
 Like moonlit ridges on a shuddering flood
 A stir of thoughts out of some silence born
 Across the sea of her dumb fathomless heart.
 At last she spoke; her voice was heard by Night:
 "I bow not to thee, O huge mask of Death,
 Black lie of night to the cowed soul of man,
 Unreal, inescapable end of things,
 Thou grim jest played with the immortal spirit.
 Conscious of immortality I walk.
 A victor spirit conscious of my force,
 Not as a suppliant to thy gates I came:

BOOK IX CANTO II

Unslain I have survived the clutch of Night.
 My first strong grief moves not my seated mind;
 My unwept tears have turned to pearls of strength:
 I have transformed my ill-shaped brittle clay
 Into the hardness of a statued soul.
 Now in the wrestling of the splendid gods
 My spirit shall be obstinate and strong
 Against the vast refusals of the world.
 I stoop not with the subject mob of minds
 Who run to glean with eager satisfied hands
 And pick from its mire mid many trampling feet
 Its scornful small concessions to the weak.
 Mine is the labour of the battling gods:
 Imposing on the slow reluctant years
 The flaming will that reigns beyond the stars,
 They lay the law of Mind on Matter's works
 And win the soul's wish from earth's inconscient force.
 First I demand whatever Satyavan,
 My husband, waking in the forest's charm
 Out of his long pure childhood's lonely dreams,
 Desired and had not for his beautiful life.
 Give, if thou must, or if thou canst, refuse."
 Death bowed his head in scornful cold assent,
 The builder of this dreamlike earth for man
 Who has mocked with vanity all gifts he gave.
 Uplifting his disastrous voice he spoke:
 "Indulgent to the dreams my touch shall break,
 I yield to his blind father's longing heart
 Kingdom and power and friends and greatness lost
 And royal trappings for his peaceful age,
 The pallid pomps of man's declining days,
 The silvered decadent glories of life's fall.
 To one who wiser grew by adverse fate,
 Goods I restore the deluded soul prefers
 To impersonal nothingness's bare sublime.
 The sensuous solace of the light I give
 To eyes which could have found a larger realm,
 A deeper vision in their fathomless night.
 For that this man desired and asked in vain
 While still he lived on earth and cherished hope.

SAVITRI

Back from the grandeur of my perilous realms
 Go, mortal, to thy small permitted sphere!
 Hasten swift-footed, lest to slay thy life
 The great laws thou hast violated, moved,
 Open at last on thee their marble eyes."
 But Savitri answered the disdainful Shade:
 "World-spirit, I was thy equal spirit born.
 I am immortal in my mortality.
 I tremble not before the immobile gaze
 Of the unchanging marble hierarchies
 That look with the stone eyes of Law and Fate.
 My soul can meet them with its living fire.
 Out of thy shadow give me back again
 Into earth's flowering spaces Satyavan
 In the sweet transiency of human limbs
 To do with him my spirit's burning will.
 I will bear with him the ancient Mother's load,
 I will follow with him earth's path that leads to God.
 Else shall the eternal spaces open to me
 While round us strange horizons far recede,
 Travelling together the immense unknown.
 For I who have trod with him the tracts of Time,
 Can meet behind his steps whatever night
 Or unimaginable stupendous dawn
 Breaks on our spirits in the untrod Beyond.
 Wherever thou leadst his soul I shall pursue."
 But to her claim opposed, implacable,
 Insisting on the immutable Decree,
 Insisting on the immitigable Law
 And the insignificance of created things,
 Out of the rolling wastes of night there came
 Born from the enigma of the unknowable depths
 A voice of majesty and appalling scorn.
 As when the storm-haired Titan-striding sea
 Throws on a swimmer its tremendous laugh
 Remembering all the joy its waves had drowned,
 So from the darkness of the sovereign night
 Against the Woman's boundless heart arose
 The almighty cry of universal Death:
 "Hast thou god-wings or feet that tread my stars,

BOOK IX CANTO II

Frail creature with the courage that aspires,
 Forgetting thy bounds of thought, thy mortal role?
 Their orbs were coiled before thy soul was formed.
 I, Death, created them out of my void;
 All things I have built in them and I destroy.
 I made the worlds my net, each joy a mesh.
 A Hunger amorous of its suffering prey,
 Life that devours, my image see in things.
 Mortal, whose spirit is my wandering breath,
 Whose transience was imagined by my smile,
 Flee clutching thy poor gains to thy trembling breast
 Pierced by my pangs Time shall not soon appease.
 Blind slave of my deaf force whom I compel
 To sin that I may punish, to desire
 That I may scourge thee with despair and grief
 And thou come bleeding to me at the last,
 Thy nothingness recognised, my greatness known,
 Turn nor attempt forbidden happy fields
 Meant for the souls that can obey my law,
 Lest in their sombre shrines thy tread awake
 From their uneasy iron-hearted sleep
 The Furies who avenge fulfilled desire.
 Dread lest in skies where passion hoped to live,
 The Unknown's lightnings start and terrified,
 Lone, sobbing, hunted by the hounds of heaven,
 A wounded and forsaken soul, thou flee
 Through the long torture of the centuries,
 Nor many lives exhaust the tireless Wrath
 Hell cannot slake nor heaven's mercy assuage.
 I will take from thee the black eternal grip:
 Clasp in thy heart thy fate's exiguous doles
 Depart in peace, if peace for man is just."
 But Savitri answered meeting scorn with scorn,
 The mortal woman to the dreadful Lord:
 "Who is this God imagined by thy night,
 Contemptuously creating worlds disdained,
 Who made for vanity the brilliant stars?
 Not he who has reared his temple in my thoughts
 And made his sacred floor my human heart.
 My God is Will and triumphs in his paths,

SAVITRI

My God is Love and sweetly suffers all.
 To him I have offered hope for sacrifice
 And gave my longings as a sacrament.
 Who shall prohibit or hedge in his course,
 The wonderful, the charioteer, the swift?
 A traveller of the million roads of life,
 His steps familiar with the lights of heaven
 Tread without pain the sword-paved courts of hell;
 There he descends to edge eternal joy.
 Love's golden wings have power to fan thy void:
 The eyes of love gaze starlike through death's night,
 The feet of love tread naked hardest worlds.
 He labours in the depths, exults on the heights;
 He shall remake thy universe, O Death."
 She spoke and for a while no voice replied,
 While still they travelled through the trackless night
 And still that gleam was like a pallid eye
 Troubling the darkness with its doubtful gaze.
 Then once more came a deep and perilous pause
 In that unreal journey through blind Nought;
 Once more a Thought, a Word in the void arose
 And Death made answer to the human soul:
 "What is thy hope? to what dost thou aspire?
 This is thy body's sweetest lure of bliss,
 Assailed by pain a frail precarious form,
 To please for a few years thy faltering sense
 With honey of physical longings and the heart's fire
 And a vain oneness seeking to embrace
 The brilliant idol of a fugitive hour.
 And thou, what art thou, soul, thou glorious dream
 Of brief emotions made and glittering thoughts,
 A thin dance of fireflies speeding through the night,
 A sparkling ferment in life's sunlit mire?
 Wilt thou claim immortality, O heart,
 Crying against the eternal witnesses
 That thou and he are endless powers and last?
 Death only lasts and the unconscious Void.
 I only am eternal and endure.
 I am the shapeless formidable Vast,
 I am the emptiness that men call Space,

BOOK IX CANTO II

I am a timeless Nothingness carrying all,
 I am the Illimitable, the mute Alone.
 I, Death, am He; there is no other God.
 All from my depths are born, they live by death;
 All to my depths return and are no more.
 I have made a world by my unconscious Force.
 My force is Nature that creates and slays
 The hearts that hope, the limbs that long to live.
 I have made man her instrument and slave,
 His body I made my banquet, his life my food.
 Man has no other help but only Death;
 He comes to me at his end for rest and peace.
 I, Death, am the one refuge of thy soul.
 The gods to whom man prays can help not man;
 They are my imaginations and my moods
 Reflected in him by illusion's power.
 That which thou seest as thy immortal self
 Is a shadowy icon of my infinite,
 Is Death in thee dreaming of eternity.
 I am the Immobile in which all things move,
 I am the nude Inane in which they cease:
 I have no body and no tongue to speak,
 I commune not with human eye and ear;
 Only thy thought gave a figure to my void.
 Because, O aspirant to divinity,
 Thou calledst me to wrestle with thy soul,
 I have assumed a face, a form, a voice.
 But if there were a being witnessing all,
 How should he help thy passionate desire?
 Aloof he watches sole and absolute,
 Indifferent to thy cry in nameless calm.
 His being is pure, unwounded, motionless, one.
 One endless watches the unconscious scene
 Where all things perish, as the foam the stars.
 The One lives for ever. There no Satyavan
 Changing was born and there no Savitri
 Claims from brief life her bribe of joy. There love
 Came never with his fretful eyes of tears,
 Nor Time is there nor the vain vasts of Space.
 It wears no living face, it has no name,

SAVITRI

No gaze, no heart that throbs, it asks no second
 To aid its being or to share its joys.
 It is delight immortally alone.
 If thou desirest immortality,
 Be then alone sufficient to thy soul:
 Live in thyself; forget the man thou lov'st.
 My last grand death shall rescue thee from life;
 Then shalt thou rise into thy unnamed source."
 But Savitri replied to the dread Voice:
 "O Death, who reasonest, I reason not,
 Reason that scans and breaks, but cannot build
 Or builds in vain because she doubts her work.
 I am, I love, I see, I act, I will."
 Death answered her, one deep surrounding cry:
 "Know also. Knowing, thou shalt cease to love
 And cease to will, delivered from thy heart,
 So shalt thou rest for ever and be still,
 Consenting to the impermanence of things."
 But Savitri replied for man to Death:
 "When I have loved for ever, I shall know.
 Love in me knows the truth all changings mask.
 I know that knowledge is a vast embrace:
 I know that every being is myself,
 In every heart is hidden the myriad One.
 I know the calm Transcendent bears the world,
 The veiled Inhabitant, the silent Lord:
 I feel his secret act, his intimate fire;
 I hear the murmur of the cosmic Voice.
 I know my coming was a wave from God.
 For all his suns were conscient in my birth,
 And one who loves in us came veiled by death.
 Then man was born among the monstrous stars
 Dowered with a mind and heart to conquer thee."
 In the eternity of his ruthless will
 Sure of his empire and his armoured might,
 Like one disdaining violent helpless words
 From victim lips Death answered not again.
 He stood in silence and in darkness wrapped,
 A figure motionless, a shadow vague,
 Girt with the terrors of his secret sword.

BOOK IX CANTO II

Half-seen in clouds appeared a sombre face;
Night's dusk tiara was his matted hair,
The ashes of the pyre his forehead's sign.
Once more a Wanderer in the unending Night,
Blindly forbidden by dead vacant eyes,
She travelled through the dumb unhoping vasts.
Around her rolled the shuddering waste of gloom,
Its swallowing emptiness and joyless death
Resentful of her thought and life and love.
Through the long fading night by her compelled,
Gliding half-seen on their unearthly path,
Phantasmal in the dimness moved the three.

END OF BOOK NINE

BOOK TEN
The Book of the Double Twilight



CANTO ONE

THE DREAM TWILIGHT OF THE IDEAL

ALL still was darkness dread and desolate;
 There was no change nor any hope of change.
 In this black dream which was a house of Void,
 A walk to Nowhere in a land of Nought,
 Ever they drifted without aim or goal;
 Gloom led to worse gloom, death to an emptier death,
 In some positive Non-Being's purposeless Vast
 Through formless wastes dumb and unknowable.
 An ineffectual beam of suffering light
 Through the despairing darkness dogged their steps
 Like the remembrance of a glory lost;
 Even while it grew, it seemed unreal there,
 Yet haunted Nihil's chill stupendous realm,
 Unquenchable, perpetual, lonely, null,
 A pallid ghost of some dead eternity.
 It was as if she must pay now her debt,
 Her vain presumption to exist and think,
 To some brilliant Maya that conceived her soul.
 This most she must absolve with endless pangs,
 Her deep original sin, the will to be
 And the sin last, greatest, the spiritual pride,
 That, made of dust, equalled itself with heaven,
 Its scorn of the worm writhing in the mud,
 Condemned, ephemeral, born from Nature's dream,
 Refusal of the transient creature's role,
 The claim to be a living fire of God,
 The will to be immortal and divine.
 In that tremendous darkness heavy and bare
 She atoned for all since the first act whence sprang
 The error of the consciousness of Time,

SAVITRI

The rending of the Inconscient's seal of sleep,
 The primal and unpardoned revolt that broke
 The peace and silence of the Nothingness
 Which was before a seeming universe
 Appeared in a vanity of imagined space
 And life arose engendering grief and pain:
 A great Negation was the Real's face
 Prohibiting the vain process of Time:
 And when there is no world, no creature more,
 When Time's intrusion has been blotted out,
 It shall last, unbodied, saved from thought, at peace.
 Accursed in what had been her godhead source,
 Condemned to live for ever empty of bliss,
 Her immortality her chastisement,
 Her spirit, guilty of being, wandered doomed,
 Moving for ever through eternal Night.
 But Maya is a veil of the Absolute;
 A Truth occult has made this mighty world:
 The Eternal's wisdom and self-knowledge act
 In ignorant Mind and in the body's steps.
 The Inconscient is the Superconscient's sleep.
 An unintelligible Intelligence
 Invents creation's paradox profound;
 Spiritual thought is crammed in Matter's forms,
 Unseen it throws out a dumb energy
 And works a miracle by a machine.
 All here is a mystery of contraries:
 Darkness a magic of self-hidden light,
 Suffering some secret rapture's tragic mask
 And death an instrument of perpetual life.
 Although Death walks beside us on Life's road,
 A dim bystander at the body's start
 And a last judgment on man's futile works,
 Other is the riddle of its ambiguous face:
 Death is a stair, a door, a stumbling stride
 The soul must take to cross from birth to birth,
 A grey defeat pregnant with victory,
 A whip to lash us towards our deathless state.
 The inconscient world is the spirit's self-made room,
 Eternal Night shadow of eternal Day.

BOOK X CANTO I

Night is not our beginning nor our end;
 She is the dark Mother in whose womb we have hid
 Safe from too swift a waking to world-pain.
 We came to her from a supernal Light,
 By Light we live and to the Light we go.
 Here in this seat of Darkness mute and lone,
 In the heart of everlasting Nothingness
 Light conquered now even by that feeble beam:
 Its faint infiltration drilled the blind deaf mass;
 Almost it changed into a glimmering sight
 That housed the phantom of an aureate Sun
 Whose orb pupilled the eye of Nothingness.
 A golden fire came in and burnt Night's heart;
 Her dusky mindlessness began to dream;
 The Inconscient conscious grew, Night felt and thought.
 Assailed in the sovereign emptiness of its reign
 The intolerant Darkness paled and drew apart
 Till only a few black remnants stained that Ray.
 But on a failing edge of dumb lost space
 Still a great dragon body sullenly loomed;
 Adversary of the slow struggling Dawn
 Defending its ground of tortured mystery,
 It trailed its coils through the dead martyred air
 And curving fled down a grey slope of Time.

There is a morning twilight of the gods;
 Miraculous from sleep their forms arise
 And God's long nights are justified by dawn.
 There breaks a passion and splendour of new birth
 And hue-winged visions stray across the lids,
 The dreaming deities look beyond the seen
 And fashion in their thoughts the ideal worlds
 Sprung from a limitless moment of desire
 That once had lodged in some abysmal heart.
 Passed was the heaviness of the eyeless dark
 And all the sorrow of the night was dead:
 Surprised by a blind joy with groping hands
 Like one who wakes to find his dreams were true,
 Into a happy misty twilit world
 Where all ran after light and joy and love

SAVITRI

She slipped; there far-off raptures drew more close
 And deep anticipations of delight
 For ever eager to be grasped and held,
 Were never grasped, yet breathed strange ecstasy.
 A pearl-winged indistinctness fleeting swam,
 An air that dared not suffer too much light.
 Vague fields were there, vague pastures gleaned, vague trees,
 Vague scenes dim-hearted in a drifting haze;
 Vague cattle white roamed glimmering through the mist;
 Vague spirits wandered with a bodiless cry,
 Vague melodies touched the soul and fled pursued
 Into harmonious distances unseized;
 Forms subtly elusive and half-luminous powers
 Wishing no goal for their unearthly course
 Strayed happily through vague ideal lands
 Or floated without footing or their walk
 Left steps of reverie on sweet memory's ground;
 Or they paced to the mighty measure of their thoughts
 Led by a low far chanting of the gods.
 A ripple of gleaming wings crossed the far sky;
 Birds like pale-bosomed imaginations flew
 With low disturbing voices of desire,
 And half-heard lowings drew the listening ear,
 As if the Sun-god's brilliant kine were there
 Hidden in mist and passing towards the sun.
 These fugitive beings, these elusive shapes
 Were all that claimed the eye and met the soul,
 The natural inhabitants of that world.
 But nothing there was fixed or stayed for long;
 No mortal feet could rest upon that soil,
 No breath of life lingered embodied there.
 In that fine chaos joy fled dancing past
 And beauty evaded settled line and form
 And hid its sense in mysteries of hue;
 Yet gladness ever repeated the same notes
 And gave the sense of an enduring world;
 There was a strange consistency of shapes,
 And the same thoughts were constant passers-by
 And all renewed unendingly its charm
 Alluring ever the expectant heart

BOOK X CANTO I

Like music that one always waits to hear
 Like the recurrence of a haunting rhyme.
 One touched incessantly things never seized,
 A skirt of worlds invisibly divine.
 As if a trail of disappearing stars
 There showered upon the floating atmosphere
 Colours and lights and evanescent gleams
 That called to follow into magic heaven,
 And in each cry that fainted on the ear
 There was the voice of an unrealised bliss.
 An adoration reigned in the yearning heart,
 A spirit of purity, an elusive presence
 Of faery beauty and ungrasped delight
 Whose momentary and escaping thrill,
 However unsubstantial to our flesh,
 And brief even in imperishableness,
 Much sweeter seemed than any rapture known
 Earth or all-conquering heaven can ever give.
 Heaven ever young and earth too firm and old
 Delay the heart by immobility:
 Their raptures of creation last too long,
 Their bold formations are too absolute;
 Carved by an anguish of divine endeavour
 They stand up sculptured on the eternal hills,
 Or quarried from the living rocks of God
 Win immortality by perfect form.
 They are too intimate with eternal things:
 Vessels of infinite significances,
 They are too clear, too great, too meaningful;
 No mist or shadow soothes the vanquished sight,
 No soft penumbra of incertitude.
 These only touch a golden hem of bliss,
 The gleaming shoulder of some godlike hope,
 The flying feet of exquisite desires.
 On a slow trembling brink between night and day
 They shone like visitants from the morning star,
 Satisfied beginnings of perfection, first
 Tremulous imaginings of a heavenly world:
 They mingle in a passion of pursuit,
 Thrilled with a spray of joy too slight to tire.

SAVITRI

All in this world was shadowed forth, not limned,
 Like faces leaping on a fan of fire
 Or shapes of wonder in a tinted blur,
 Like fugitive landscapes painting silver mists.
 Here vision fled back from the sight alarmed,
 And sound sought refuge from the ear's surprise,
 And all experience was a hasty joy.
 The joys here snatched were half-forbidden things,
 Timorous soul-bridals delicately veiled
 As when a goddess' bosom dimly moves
 To first desire and her white soul transfigured,
 A glimmering Eden crossed by fairy gleams,
 Trembles to expectation's fiery wand,
 But nothing is familiar yet with bliss.
 All things in this fair realm were heavenly strange
 In a fleeting gladness of untired delight,
 In an insistency of magic change.
 Past vanishing hedges, hurrying hints of fields,
 Mid swift escaping lanes that fled her feet
 Journeying she wished no end: as one through clouds
 Travels upon a mountain ridge and hears
 Arising to him out of hidden depths
 Sound of invisible streams, she walked besieged
 By the illusion of a mystic space,
 A charm of bodiless touches felt and heard
 A sweetness as of voices high and dim
 Calling like travellers upon seeking winds
 Melodiously with an alluring cry.
 As if a music old yet ever new,
 Moving suggestions on her heart-strings dwelt,
 Thoughts that no habitation found, yet clung
 With passionate repetition to her mind,
 Desires that hurt not, happy only to live
 Always the same and always unfulfilled
 Sang in the breast like a celestial lyre.
 Thus all could last, yet nothing ever be.
 In this beauty as of mind made visible,
 Dressed in its rays of wonder Satyavan
 Before her seemed the centre of its charm,
 Head of her loveliness of longing dreams

BOOK X CANTO I

And captain of the fancies of her soul.
 Even the dreadful majesty of Death's face
 And its sombre sadness could not darken nor slay
 The intangible lustre of those fleeting skies.
 The sombre Shadow sullen, implacable
 Made beauty and laughter more imperative;
 Enhanced by his grey, joy grew more bright and dear;
 His dark contrast edging ideal sight
 Deepened unuttered meanings to the heart;
 Pain grew a trembling undertone of bliss
 And transience immortality's floating hem,
 A moment's robe in which she looked more fair,
 Its antithesis sharpening her divinity.
 A comrade of the Ray and Mist and Flame,
 By a moon-bright face a brilliant moment drawn,
 Almost she seemed a thought mid floating thoughts,
 Seen hardly by a visionary mind
 Amid the white inward musings of the soul
 Half-vanquished by the dream-happiness around,
 Awhile she moved on an enchantment's soil,
 But still remained possessor of her soul.
 Above, her spirit in its mighty trance
 Saw all, but lived for its transcendent task,
 Immutable like a fixed eternal star.

CANTO TWO

THE GOSPEL OF DEATH AND VANITY
OF THE IDEAL

THEN pealed the calm inexorable voice:
 Abolishing hope, cancelling life's golden truths,
 Fatal its accents smote the trembling air.
 That lovely world swam thin and frail, most like
 Some pearly evanescent farewell gleam
 On the faint verge of dusk in moonless eyes.
 "Prisoner of Nature, many-visioned spirit,
 Thought's creature in the ideal's realm enjoying
 Thy unsubstantial immortality
 The subtle marvellous mind of man has feigned,
 This is the world from which thy yearnings came.
 When it would build eternity from the dust,
 Man's thought paints images illusion rounds;
 Prophesying glories it shall never see,
 It labours delicately among its dreams.
 Behold this fleeing of light-tasselled shapes,
 Aerial raiment of unbodied gods;
 A rapture of things that never can be born,
 Hope chants to hope a bright immortal choir;
 Cloud satisfies cloud, phantom to longing phantom
 Leans sweetly, sweetly is clasped or sweetly chased.
 This is the stuff from which the ideal is formed:
 Its builder is thought, its base the heart's desire,
 But nothing real answers to their call.
 The ideal dwells not in heaven, nor on the earth,
 A bright delirium of man's ardour of hope
 Drunk with the wine of its own phantasy.
 It is a brilliant shadow's dreamy trail.
 Thy vision's error builds the azure skies,

BOOK X CANTO II

Thy vision's error drew the rainbow's arch;
 Thy mortal longing made for thee a soul.
 This angel in thy body thou callst love,
 Who shapes his wings from thy emotion's hues,
 In a ferment of thy body has been born
 And with the body that housed it it must die.
 It is a passion of thy yearning cells,
 It is flesh that calls to flesh to serve its lust;
 It is thy mind that seeks an answering mind
 And dreams awhile that it has found its mate;
 It is thy life that asks a human prop
 To uphold its weakness lonely in the world
 Or feeds its hunger on another's life.
 A beast of prey that pauses in its prowl,
 It crouches under a bush in splendid flower
 To seize a heart and body for its food:
 This beast thou dreamst immortal and a god.
 O human mind, vainly thou torturest
 An hour's delight to stretch through infinity's
 Long void and fill its formless, passionless gulfs,
 Persuading the insensible Abyss
 To lend eternity to perishing things,
 And trickst the fragile movements of thy heart
 With thy spirit's feint of immortality.
 All here emerges born from Nothingness;
 Encircled it lasts by the emptiness of Space,
 Awhile upheld by an unknowing Force,
 Then crumbles back into its parent Nought:
 Only the Mute alone can ever be.
 In the Alone there is no room for love.
 In vain to clothe love's perishable mud
 Thou hast woven on the Immortal's borrowed loom
 The ideal's gorgeous and unfading robe.
 The ideal never yet was real made.
 Imprisoned in form that glory cannot live;
 Into a body shut it breathes no more.
 Intangible, remote, for ever pure,
 A sovereign of its own brilliant void,
 Unwillingly it descends to earthly air
 To inhabit a white temple in man's heart:

SAVITRI

In his heart it shines rejected by his life.
 Immutable, bodiless, beautiful, grand and dumb,
 Immobile on its shining throne it sits;
 Dumb it receives his offering and his prayer.
 It has no voice to answer to his call,
 No feet that move, no hands to take his gifts:
 Aerial statue of the nude Idea,
 Virgin conception of a bodiless god,
 Its light stirs man the thinker to create
 An earthly semblance of diviner things.
 Its hued reflection falls upon man's acts;
 His institutions are its cenotaphs,
 He signs his dead conventions with its name;
 His virtues don the Ideal's skiey robe
 And a nimbus of the outline of its face:
 He hides their littleness with the divine Name.
 Yet insufficient is the bright pretence
 To screen their indigent and earthy make:
 Earth only is there and not some heavenly source.
 If heavens there are they are veiled in their own light,
 If a Truth eternal somewhere reigns unknown,
 It burns in a tremendous void of God;
 For truth shines far from the falsehoods of the world;
 How can the heavens come down to unhappy earth
 Or the eternal lodge in drifting time?
 How shall the Ideal tread earth's dolorous soil
 Where life is only a labour and a hope,
 A child of Matter and by Matter fed,
 A fire flaming low in Nature's grate,
 A journey's toilsome trudge with death for goal?
 The Avatars have lived and died in vain,
 Vain was the sage's thought, the prophet's voice;
 In vain is seen the shining upward Way.
 Earth lies unchanged beneath the circling sun;
 She loves her fall and no omnipotence
 Her mortal imperfections can erase,
 Force on man's crooked ignorance Heaven's straight line
 Or colonise a world of death with gods.
 O traveller in the chariot of the Sun,
 High priestess in the holy fancy's shrine

BOOK X CANTO II

Who with a magic ritual in earth's house
 Worshippest ideal and eternal love,
 What is this love thy thought has deified,
 This sacred legend and immortal myth?
 It is a conscious yearning of thy flesh,
 It is a glorious burning of thy nerves,
 A rose of dream-splendour petalling thy mind,
 A great red rapture and torture of thy heart.
 A sudden transfiguration of thy days;
 It passes and the world is as before.
 A ravishing edge of sweetness and of pain,
 A thrill in its yearning makes it seem divine,
 A golden bridge across the roar of the years,
 A cord tying thee to eternity.
 And yet how brief and frail! how soon is spent
 This treasure wasted by the gods on man,
 This happy closeness as of soul to soul,
 This honey of the body's companionship,
 This heightened joy, this ecstasy in the veins,
 This strange illumination of the sense!
 If Satyavan had lived, love would have died;
 But Satyavan is dead and love shall live
 A little while in thy sad breast, until
 His face and body fade on memory's wall
 Where other bodies, other faces come.
 When love breaks suddenly into the life
 At first man steps into a world of the sun;
 In his passion he feels his heavenly element:
 But only a fine sunlit patch of earth
 The marvellous aspect took of heaven's outburst.
 The snake is there and the worm in the heart of the rose.
 A word, a moment's act can slay the god;
 Precarious is his immortality,
 He has a thousand ways to suffer and die;
 Love cannot live by heavenly food alone,
 Only on sap of earth can it survive.
 For thy passion was a sensual want refined;
 A hunger of the body and the heart;
 Thy want can tire and cease or turn elsewhere
 Or love may meet a dire and pitiless end

SAVITRI

By bitter treason, or wrath with cruel wounds
 Separate, or thy unsatisfied will to others
 Depart when first love's joy lies stripped and slain:
 A dull indifference replaces fire
 Or an endearing habit imitates love:
 An outward and uneasy union lasts
 Or the routine of a life's compromise.
 Where once the seed of oneness had been cast
 Into a semblance of spiritual ground
 By a divine adventure of heavenly powers
 Two strive, constant associates without joy,
 Two egos straining in a single leash,
 Two minds divided by their jarring thoughts,
 Two spirits disjoined, for ever separate.
 Thus is the ideal falsified in man's world;
 Trivial or sombre, disillusion comes,
 Life's harsh reality stares at the soul:
 Heaven's hour adjourned flees into bodiless Time.
 Death saves thee from this and saves Satyavan:
 He now is safe, delivered from himself;
 He travels to silence and felicity.
 Call him not back to the treacheries of earth
 And the poor petty life of animal Man.
 In my vast tranquil spaces let him sleep
 In harmony with the mighty hush of death
 Where love lies slumbering on the breast of peace.
 And thou, go back alone to thy frail world:
 Chastise thy heart with knowledge, unhood and see
 Thy nature raised into clear living heights,
 The heaven-bird's view from unimagined peaks.
 For when thou givest thy spirit to a dream
 Soon hard necessity will smite thee awake:
 Purest delight began and it must end.
 Thou too shall know thy heart no anchor swinging
 Thy cradled soul moored in eternal seas.
 Vain are the cycles of thy brilliant mind.
 Renounce, forgetting joy and hope and tears
 Thy passionate nature in the bosom profound
 Of a happy Nothingness and wordless Calm,
 Delivered into my mysterious rest.

BOOK X CANTO II

One with my fathomless Nihil all forget.
 Forget thy fruitless spirit's waste of force,
 Forget the weary circle of thy birth,
 Forget the joy and the struggle and the pain,
 The vague spiritual quest which first began
 When worlds broke forth like clusters of fire-flowers,
 And great burning thoughts voyaged through the sky of mind
 And Time and its aeons crawled across the vasts
 And souls emerged into mortality."

But Savitri replied to the dark Power:
 "A dangerous music now thou findest, O Death,
 Melting thy speech into harmonious pain,
 And flut'st alluringly to tired hopes
 Thy falsehoods mingled with sad strains of truth.
 But I forbid thy voice to slay my soul.
 My love is not a hunger of the heart,
 My love is not a craving of the flesh;
 It came to me from God, to God returns..
 Even in all that life and man have marred,
 A whisper of divinity still is heard,
 A breath is felt from the eternal spheres.
 Allowed by Heaven and wonderful to man
 A sweet fire-rhythm of passion chants to love.
 There is a hope in its wild infinite cry;
 It rings with callings from forgotten heights,
 And when its strains are hushed to high-winged souls
 In their empyrean, its burning breath
 Survives beyond, the rapturous core of suns
 That flame for ever pure in skies unseen,
 A voice of the eternal Ecstasy.
 One day I shall behold my great sweet world
 Put off the dire disguises of the gods,
 Unveil from terror and disrobe from sin.
 Appeased we shall draw near our Mother's face,
 We shall cast our candid souls upon her lap;
 Then shall we clasp the ecstasy we chase,
 Then shall we shudder with the long-sought god,
 Then shall we find Heaven's unexpected strain.
 Not only is there hope for godheads pure;
 The violent and darkened deities

SAVITRI

Leaped down from the one breast in rage to find
 What the white gods had missed: they too are safe;
 A Mother's eyes are on them and her arms
 Stretched out in love desire her rebel sons.
 One who came, love and lover and beloved
 Eternal, built himself a wondrous field
 And wove the measures of a marvellous dance.
 There in its circles and its magic turns
 Attracted he arrives, repelled he flees.
 In the wild devious promptings of his mind
 He tastes the honey of tears and puts off joy
 Repenting, and has laughter and has wrath,
 And both are a broken music of the soul
 Which seeks out, reconciled, its heavenly rhyme.
 Ever he comes to us across the years
 Bearing a sweet new face that is the old.
 His bliss laughs to us or it calls concealed
 Like a far-heard unseen entrancing flute
 From moonlit branches in the throbbing woods,
 Tempting our angry search and passionate pain.
 Disguised the Lover seeks and draws our souls.
 He named himself for me, grew Satyavan.
 For we are man and woman from the first,
 The twin souls born from one undying fire.
 Did he not dawn on me in other stars?
 How has he through the thickets of the world
 Pursued me like a lion in the night
 And come upon me suddenly in the ways
 And seized me with his glorious golden leap!
 Unsatisfied he yearned for me through time,
 Sometimes with wrath and sometimes with sweet peace,
 Desiring me since first the world began.
 He rose like a wild wave out of the floods
 And dragged me helpless into seas of bliss.
 Out of my curtained past his arms arrived;
 They have touched me like the soft persuading wind,
 They have plucked me like a glad and trembling flower,
 And clasped me happily burned in ruthless flame.
 I too have found him charmed in lovely forms
 And run delighted to his distant voice

BOOK X CANTO II

And pressed to him past many dreadful bars.
 If there is a yet happier greater god,
 Let him first wear the face of Satyavan
 And let his soul be one with him I love;
 So let him seek me that I may desire.
 For only one heart beats within my breast
 And one god sits there throned. Advance, O Death,
 Beyond the phantom beauty of this world;
 For of its citizens I am not one.
 I cherish God the Fire, not God the Dream."
 But Death once more inflicted on her heart
 The majesty of his calm and dreadful voice:
 "A bright hallucination are thy thoughts.
 A prisoner haled by a spiritual cord,
 Of thy own sensuous will the ardent slave,
 Thou sendest eagle-poised to meet the sun
 Words winged with the red splendour of thy heart.
 But knowledge dwells not in the passionate heart;
 The heart's words fall back unheard from Wisdom's throne.
 Vain is thy longing to build heaven on earth.
 Artificer of Ideal and Idea,
 Mind, child of Matter in the womb of Life,
 To higher levels persuades his parents' steps,
 Inapt, they follow ill the daring guide.
 But Mind, a glorious traveller in the sky,
 Walks lamely on the earth with footsteps slow;
 Hardly he can mould the life's rebellious stuff,
 Hardly can he hold the galloping hooves of sense:
 His thoughts look straight into the very heavens;
 They draw their gold from a celestial mine,
 His acts work painfully a common ore.
 All thy high dreams were made by Matter's mind
 To solace its dull work in Matter's jail,
 Its only house where it alone seems true.
 A solid image of reality
 Carved out being to prop the works of Time;
 Matter on the firm earth sits strong and sure.
 It is the first-born of created things,
 It stands the last when mind and life are slain,
 And if it ended all would cease to be.

SAVITRI

All else is only its outcome or its phase:
 Thy soul is a brief flower by the gardener Mind
 Created on thy Matter's terrain plot;
 It perishes with the plant on which it grows,
 For from earth's sap it draws its heavenly hue:
 Thy thoughts are gleams that pass on Matter's verge,
 Thy life a lapsing wave on Matter's sea.
 A careful steward of Truth's limited means,
 Treasuring her founded facts from the squandering Power,
 It tethers mind to the tent-posts of sense,
 To a leaden grey routine clamps Life's caprice
 And ties all creatures with the cords of Law.
 A vessel of transmuting alchemies,
 A glue that sticks together mind and life,
 If Matter fails, all crumbling cracks and falls.
 All upon Matter stands as on a rock.
 Yet this security and guarantor
 Pressed for credentials an impostor proves:
 A cheat of substance where no substance is,
 An appearance and a symbol and a nought,
 Its forms have no original right to birth:
 Its aspect of a fixed stability
 Is the cover of a captive motion's swirl,
 An order of the steps of Energy's dance
 Whose footmarks leave for ever the same signs,
 A concrete face of unsubstantial Time,
 A trickle dotting the emptiness of Space:
 A stable-seeming movement without change,
 Yet change arrives and the last change is death.
 What seemed most real once, is Nihil's show.
 Its figures are snares that trap and prison the sense;
 The beginningless void was its artificer:
 Nothing is there but aspects limned by Chance
 And seeming shapes of seeming Energy.
 All by Death's mercy breathe and live awhile,
 All think and act by the Inconscient's grace.
 Addict of the roseate luxury of thy thoughts,
 Turn not thy gaze within thyself to look
 At visions in the gleaming crystal, Mind,
 Close not thy lids to dream the forms of Gods.

BOOK X CANTO II

At last to open thy eyes consent and see-
 The stuff of which thou and the world are made.
 Inconscient in the still inconscient Void
 Inexplicably a moving world sprang forth:
 Awhile secure, happily insensible,
 It could not rest content with its own truth.
 For something on its nescient breast was born
 Condemned to see and know, to feel and love,
 It watched its acts, imagined a soul within;
 It groped for truth and dreamed of Self and God.
 When all unconscious was, then all was well.
 I, Death, was king and kept my regal state,
 Designing my unwilling, unerring plan,
 Creating with a calm insentient heart.
 In my sovereign power of unreality
 Obliging nothingness to take a form,
 Infallibly my blind unthinking force
 Making by chance a fixity like fate's,
 By whim the formulas of Necessity,
 Founded on the hollow ground of the Inane
 The sure bizarrerie of Nature's scheme.
 I curbed the vacant ether into Space;
 A huge expanding and contracting breath
 Harboured the fires of the universe:
 I struck out the supreme original spark
 And spread its sparse ranked armies through the Inane,
 Manufactured the stars from the occult radiances,
 Marshalled the platoons of the invisible dance;
 I formed earth's beauty out of atom and gas,
 And built from chemic plasm the living man.
 Then Thought came in and spoilt the harmonious world:
 Matter began to hope and think and feel,
 Tissue and nerve bore joy and agony.
 The inconscient cosmos strove to learn its task;
 An ignorant personal god was born in Mind
 And to understand invented reason's law,
 The impersonal Vast throbbed back to man's desire,
 A trouble rocked the great world's blind still heart
 And Nature lost her wide immortal calm.
 Thus came this warped incomprehensible scene

SAVITRI

Of souls enmeshed in life's delight and pain
 And Matter's sleep and Mind's mortality,
 Of beings in Nature's prison waiting death
 And consciousness left in seeking ignorance.
 This is the world in which thou movst, astray
 In the tangled pathways of the human mind,
 In the issueless circling of thy human life,
 Searching for thy soul and thinking God is here.
 But where is room for soul or place for God
 In the brute immensity of a machine?
 A transient Breath thou takest for thy soul,
 Born from a gas, a plasm, a sperm, a gene,
 A magnified image of man's mind for God,
 A shadow of thyself thrown upon Space.
 Interposed between the upper and nether Void,
 Thy consciousness reflects the world around
 In the distorting mirror of Ignorance
 Or upwards turns to catch imagined stars.
 Or if a half Truth is playing with the earth
 Throwing its light on a dark shadowy ground,
 It touches only and leaves a luminous smudge.
 Immortality thou claimest for thy spirit,
 But immortality for imperfect man,
 A god who hurts himself at every step,
 Would be a cycle of eternal pain.
 Wisdom and love thou claimest as thy right;
 But knowledge in this world is error's make,
 A brilliant procuress of Nescience
 And human love a posturer on earth-stage
 Who imitates with verve a faery dance.
 An extract pressed from hard experience,
 Man's knowledge casked in the barrels of Memory
 Has the harsh savour of a mortal draught:
 A sweet secretion from the erotic glands
 Flattering and torturing the burning nerves,
 Love is a honey and poison in the breast
 Drunk by it as the nectar of the gods.
 Earth's human wisdom is no great-browed power,
 And love no gleaming angel from the skies.
 If they aspire beyond earth's dullard air,

BOOK X CANTO II

Arriving sunwards with frail waxen wings
 How high could reach that forced unnatural flight?
 But not on earth can divine wisdom reign
 And not on earth can divine love be found;
 Heaven-born, only in heaven can they live,
 Or else there too perhaps they are shining dreams.
 Nay, is not all thou art and doest a dream?
 Thy mind and life are tricks of Matter's force.
 If thy mind seems to thee a radiant sun,
 If thy life runs a swift and glorious dream,
 This is the illusion of thy mortal heart
 Dazzled by a ray of happiness or light.
 Impotent to live by their own right divine,
 Convinced of their brilliant unreality,
 When their supporting ground is cut away,
 These children of Matter into Matter die.
 Even Matter vanishes into Energy's vague
 And Energy is a motion of old Nought.
 How shall the Ideal's unsubstantial hues
 Be painted stiff on earth's vermilion blur,
 A dream within a dream come doubly true?
 How shall the will-o'-the-wisp become a star?
 The Ideal is a malady of thy mind,
 A bright delirium of thy speech and thought,
 A strange wine of beauty lifting thee to false sight.
 A noble fiction of thy yearnings made,
 Thy human imperfection it must share:
 Its forms in Nature disappoint the heart,
 And never shall it find its heavenly shape
 And never can it be fulfilled in Time.
 O soul misled by the splendour of thy thoughts,
 O earthly creature with thy dream of heaven,
 Obey, resigned and still, the earthly law.
 Accept the light that falls upon thy days;
 Take what thou canst of Life's permitted joy,
 Submitting to the ordeal of Fate's scourge
 Suffer what thou must of toil and grief and care.
 There shall approach silencing thy passionate heart
 My long calm night of everlasting sleep:
 There into the hush from which thou cam'st retire."

CANTO THREE

THE DEBATE OF LOVE AND DEATH

A SAD destroying cadence the voice sank;
 It seemed to lead the advancing march of Life
 Into some still original Inane.
 But Savitri answered to almighty Death:
 "O dark-browed sophist of the universe
 Who veilst the Real with its own Idea,
 Hiding with brute objects Nature's living face,
 Masking eternity with thy dance of death,
 Thou hast woven the ignorant Mind into a screen
 And made of Thought error's purveyor and scribe,
 And a false witness of mind's servant sense.
 An aesthete of the sorrow of the world,
 Champion of a harsh and sad philosophy
 Thou hast used words to shutter out the Light
 And called in Truth to vindicate a lie.
 A lying reality is falsehood's crown
 And a perverted truth her richest gem.
 O Death, thou speakest Truth but Truth that slays,
 I answer to thee with the Truth that saves.
 A traveller new-discovering himself,
 One made of Matter's world his starting-point,
 He made of Nothingness his living-room
 And Night a process of the eternal light
 And death a spur towards immortality.
 God wrapped his head from sight in Matter's cowl,
 His consciousness dived into inconscient depths,
 All-knowledge seemed a huge dark Nescience;
 Infinity wore a boundless zero's form.
 His abysms of bliss became insensible deeps,
 Eternity a blank spiritual Vast.

BOOK X CANTO III

Annulling an original nullity,
 The Timeless took its ground in emptiness
 And drew the figure of a universe,
 That the spirit might adventure into Time
 And wrestle with adamant Necessity
 And the soul pursue a cosmic pilgrimage.
 A spirit moved in black immensities
 And built a Thought in ancient Nothingness;
 A soul in God's tremendous Void was lit,
 A secret labouring glow of nascent fire.
 In Nihil's gulf his mighty Puissance wrought;
 She swung her formless motion into shapes,
 Made Matter the body of the Bodiless.
 Infant and dim the eternal Might awoke.
 In inert Matter breathed a slumbering Life,
 In a subconscious Life Mind lay asleep;
 In waking Life it stretched its giant limbs
 To shake from it the torpor of its drowse;
 A senseless substance quivered into sense,
 The world's heart commenced to beat, its eyes to see.
 In the crowded dumb vibrations of a brain
 Thought fumbled in a ring to find itself,
 Discovered speech and fed the new-born Word
 That bridged with spans of light the world's ignorance.
 In waking Mind, the Thinker built his house.
 A reasoning animal willed and planned and sought;
 He stood erect among his brute compeers,
 He built life new, measured the universe,
 Opposed his fate and wrestled with unseen Powers,
 Conquered and used the laws that rule the world,
 And hoped to ride the heavens and reach the stars,
 A master of his huge environment.
 Now through Mind's windows stares the demi-god
 Hidden behind the curtains of man's soul:
 He has seen the Unknown, looked on Truth's veiless face;
 A ray has touched him from the eternal Sun;
 Motionless, voiceless in foreseeing depths,
 He stands awake in Supernature's light
 And sees a glory of arisen wings
 And sees the vast descending might of God.

SAVITRI

O Death, thou lookst on an unfinished world
 Assailed by thee and of its road unsure,
 Peopled by imperfect minds and ignorant lives,
 And sayest God is not and all is vain.
 How shall the child already be the man?
 Because he is infant, shall he never grow?
 Because he is ignorant, shall he never learn?
 In a small fragile seed a great tree lurks,
 In a tiny gene a thinking being is shut;
 A little element in a little sperm,
 It grows and is a conqueror and a sage.
 Then wilt thou spew out, Death, God's mystic truth,
 Deny the occult spiritual miracle?
 Still wilt thou say there is no spirit, no God?
 A mute material Nature wakes and sees;
 She has invented speech, unveiled a will.
 Something there waits beyond towards which she strives,
 Something surrounds her into which she grows:
 To uncover the spirit, to change back into God,
 To exceed herself is her transcendent task.
 In God concealed the world began to be,
 Tardily it travels towards manifest God:
 Our imperfection towards perfection toils,
 The body is the chrysalis of a soul:
 The infinite holds the finite in its arms,
 Time travels towards revealed eternity.
 A miracle structure of the eternal Mage,
 Matter its mystery hides from its own eyes,
 A scripture written out in cryptic signs,
 An occult document of the All-Wonderful's art.
 All here bears witness to his secret might,
 In all we feel his presence and his power.
 A blaze of his sovereign glory is the sun,
 A glory is the gold and glimmering moon.
 A glory is his dream of purple sky.
 A march of his greatness are the wheeling stars.
 His laughter of beauty breaks out in green trees,
 His moments of beauty triumph in a flower;
 The blue sea's chant, the rivulet's wandering voice
 Are murmurs falling from the Eternal's harp.

BOOK X CANTO III

This world is God fulfilled in outwardness.
 His ways challenge our reason and our sense;
 By blind brute movements of an ignorant Force,
 By means we slight as small, obscure or base
 A greatness founded upon little things,
 He has built a world in the unknowing Void.
 His forms he has massed from infinitesimal dust;
 His marvels are built from insignificant things.
 If mind is crippled, life untaught and crude,
 If brutal masks are there and evil acts,
 They are incidents of his vast and varied plot,
 His great and dangerous drama's needed steps;
 He makes with these and all his passion-play,
 A play and yet no play but the deep scheme
 Of a transcendent Wisdom finding ways
 To meet her Lord in the shadow and the Night:
 Above her is the vigil of the stars;
 Watched by a solitary Infinitude
 She embodies in dumb Matter the Divine,
 In symbol minds and lives the Absolute.
 A miracle-monger her mechanical craft;
 Matter's machine worked out the laws of thought,
 Life's engines served the labour of a soul:
 The mighty Mother her creation wrought,
 A huge caprice self-bound by iron laws,
 And shut God into an enigmatic world:
 She lulled the Omniscient into nescient sleep,
 Omnipotence on Inertia's back she drove,
 Trod perfectly with divine unconscious steps
 The enormous circle of her wonder-works.
 Immortality assured itself by death;
 The Eternal's face was seen through drifts of Time.
 His knowledge he disguised as Ignorance,
 His Good he sowed in Evil's monstrous bed,
 Made error a door by which Truth could enter in,
 His plant of bliss watered with Sorrow's tears.
 A thousand aspects point back to the One;
 A dual Nature covered the Unique.
 In this meeting of the Eternal's mingling masques,
 This tangle-dance of passionate contraries

SAVITRI

Locking like lovers in a forbidden embrace
 The quarrel of their lost identity,
 In this wrestle and wrangle of the extremes of Power
 Earth's million roads struggled towards deity.
 All stumbled on behind a stumbling Guide,
 Yet every stumble is a needed pace
 On unknown routes to an unknowable goal.
 All blundered and straggled towards the one Divine.
 As if transmuted by a titan spell
 The eternal powers assumed a dubious face:
 Idols of an oblique divinity,
 They wore the heads of animal or troll,
 Assumed ears of the fawn, the satyr's hoof,
 Or harboured the demoniac in their gaze.
 A crooked maze they made of thinking mind,
 They suffered a metamorphosis of the heart,
 Admitting Bacchant revellers from the Night
 Into its sanctuary of delights,
 As in a Dionysian masquerade.
 On the highways, in the gardens of the world
 They wallowed oblivious of their divine parts,
 As drunkards of a dire Circean wine
 Or a child who sprawls and sports in Nature's mire.
 Even wisdom, hewer of the roads of God,
 Is a partner in the deep disastrous game:
 Lost is the pilgrim's wallet and the scrip,
 She fails to read the map and watch the star.
 A poor self-righteous virtue is her stock
 And reason's pragmatic grope or abstract sight,
 Or the technique of a brief hour's success
 She teaches, an usher in utility's school.
 On the ocean surface of vast Consciousness
 Small thoughts in shoals are fished up into a net
 But the great truths escape her narrow cast;
 Guarded from vision by creation's depths,
 Obscure they swim in blind enormous gulfs
 Safe from the little sounding leads of mind,
 Too far for the puny diver's shallow plunge.
 Our mortal vision peers with ignorant eyes;
 It has no gaze on the deep heart of things.

Our knowledge walks leaning on Error's staff,
A worshipper of false dogmas and false gods,
Or fanatic of a fierce intolerant creed
Or a seeker doubting every truth he finds,
A sceptic facing Light with adamant No
Or chilling the heart with dry ironic smile,
A cynic stamping out the god in man;
A darkness wallows in the paths of Time
Or lifts its giant head to blot the stars;
It makes a cloud of the interpreting mind
And intercepts the oracles of the Sun.
Yet Light is there; it stands at Nature's doors:
It holds a torch to lead the traveller in.
It waits to be kindled in our secret cells;
It is a star lighting an ignorant sea,
A lamp upon our poop piercing the night.
As knowledge grows Light flames up from within:
It is a shining warrior in the mind,
An eagle of dreams in the divining heart,
An armour in the fight, a bow of God.
Then larger dawns arrive and Wisdom's pomps
Cross through the being's dim, half-lighted fields;
Philosophy climbs up Thought's cloud-bank peaks
And Science tears out Nature's occult powers,
Enormous jinns who serve a dwarf's small needs,
Exposes the sealed minutiae of her art
And conquers her by her own captive force.
On heights unreached by mind's most daring soar,
Upon a dangerous edge of failing Time
The soul draws back into its deathless Self;
Man's knowledge becomes God's supernal Ray.
There is the mystic realm whence leaps the power
Whose fire burns in the eyes of seer and sage;
A lightning flash of visionary sight,
It plays upon an inward verge of mind:
Thought silenced gazes into a brilliant Void.
A voice comes down from mystic unseen peaks:
A cry of splendour from a mouth of storm,
It is the voice that speaks to night's profound,
It is the thunder and the flaming call.

SAVITRI

Above the planes that climb from nescient earth,
 A hand is lifted towards the Invisible's realm,
 Beyond the superconscient's blinding line
 And plucks away the screens of the Unknown;
 A spirit within looks into the Eternal's eyes.
 It hears the Word to which our hearts were deaf,
 It sees through the blaze in which our thoughts grew blind;
 It drinks from the naked breasts of glorious Truth,
 It learns the secrets of eternity.
 Thus all was plunged into the riddling Night,
 Thus all is raised to meet a dazzling Sun.
 O Death, this is the mystery of thy reign.
 In earth's anomalous and tragic field
 Carried in its aimless journey by the sun
 Mid the forced marches of the great dumb stars,
 A darkness occupied the fields of God,
 And Matter's world was governed by thy shape.
 Thy mask has covered the Eternal's face,
 The Bliss that made the world has fallen asleep.
 Abandoned in the Vast she slumbered on:
 An evil transmutation overtook
 Her members till she knew herself no more.
 Only through her creative slumber flit
 Frail memories of the joy and beauty meant
 Under the sky's blue laugh mid green-scarfed trees
 And happy squanderings of scents and hues,
 In the field of the golden promenade of the sun
 And the vigil of the dream-light of the stars,
 Amid high meditating heads of hills,
 On the bosom of voluptuous rain-kissed earth
 And by the sapphire tumblings of the sea.
 But now the primal innocence is lost
 And Death and Ignorance govern the mortal world
 And Nature's visage wears a greyer hue.
 Earth still has kept her early charm and grace,
 The grandeur and the beauty still are hers,
 But veiled is the divine Inhabitant.
 The souls of men have wandered from the Light
 And the great Mother turns away her face.
 The eyes of the creatrix Bliss are closed

And sorrow's touch has found her in her dreams.
 As she turns and tosses on her bed of Void,
 Because she cannot wake and find herself
 And cannot build again her perfect shape,
 Oblivious of her nature and her state,
 Forgetting her instinct of felicity,
 Forgetting to create a world of joy,
 She weeps and makes her creatures' eyes to weep;
 Testing with sorrow's edge her children's breasts,
 She spends on life's vain waste of hope and toil
 The poignant luxury of grief and tears.
 In the nightmare change of her half-conscious dream,
 Tortured herself and torturing by her touch,
 She comes to our hearts and bodies and our lives
 Wearing a hard and cruel mask of pain.
 Our nature twisted by the abortive birth
 Returns wry answers to life's questioning shocks,
 An acrid relish finds in the world's pangs,
 Drinks the sharp wine of grief's perversity.
 A curse is laid on the pure joy of life:
 Delight, God's sweetest sign and Beauty's twin,
 Dreaded by aspiring saint and austere sage,
 Is shunned, a dangerous and ambiguous cheat,
 A specious trick of an infernal Power
 It tempts the soul to its self-hurt and fall.
 A puritan God made pleasure a poisonous fruit,
 Or red drug in the market-place of Death,
 And sin the child of Nature's ecstasy.
 Yet every creature hunts for happiness,
 Buys with harsh pangs or tears by violence
 From the dull breast of the inanimate globe
 Some fragment or some broken shard of bliss.
 Even joy itself becomes a poisonous draught,
 Its hunger is made a dreadful hook of Fate.
 All means are held good to catch a single beam,
 Eternity sacrificed for a moment's bliss:
 Yet for joy and not for sorrow earth was made
 And not as a dream in endless suffering Time.
 Although God made the world for his delight,
 An ignorant Power took charge and seemed his Will

SAVITRI

And Death's deep falsity has mastered Life.
All grew a play of Chance simulating Fate.

A secret air of pure felicity
Deep like a sapphire heaven our spirits breathe;
Our hearts and bodies feel its obscure call,
Our senses grope for it and touch and lose.
If this withdrew, the world would sink in the Void;
If this were not, nothing could move or live.
A hidden Bliss is at the root of things.
A mute Delight regards Time's countless works:
To house God's joy in things Space gave wide room,
To house God's joy in self our souls were born.
This universe an old enchantment guards;
Its objects are carved cups of World-Delight
Whose charmed wine is some deep soul's rapture-drink:
The All-Wonderful has packed heaven with his dreams,
He has made blank ancient Space his marvel-house;
He spilled his spirit into Matter's signs:
His fires of grandeur burn in the great sun,
He glides through heaven shimmering in the moon;
He is beauty carolling in the fields of sound;
He chants the stanzas of the odes of Wind;
He is silence watching in the stars at night;
He wakes at dawn and calls from every bough,
Lies stunned in the stone and dreams in flower and tree.
Even in this labour and dolour of Ignorance,
On the hard perilous ground of difficult earth,
In spite of death and evil circumstance
A will to live persists, a joy to be.
There is a joy in all that meets the sense,
A joy in all experience of the soul,
A joy in evil and a joy in good,
A joy in virtue and a joy in sin:
Indifferent to the threat of karmic law,
Joy dares to grow upon forbidden soil,
Its sap runs through the plant and flowers of Pain:
It thrills with the drama of fate and tragic doom,
It tears its food from sorrow and ecstasy,
On danger and difficulty whets its strength;

It wallows with the reptile and the worm
 And lifts its head, an equal of the stars;
 It shares the fairies' dance, dines with the gnome:
 It basks in the light and heat of many suns,
 The sun of Beauty and the sun of Power
 Flatter and foster it with golden beam;
 It grows towards the Titan and the God.
 On earth it lingers drinking its deep fill,
 Through the symbol of her pleasure and her pain,
 Of the grapes of Heaven and the flowers of the Abyss,
 Of the flame-stabs and the torment-craft of Hell
 And dim fragments of the glory of Paradise.
 In the small paltry pleasures of man's life,
 In his petty passions and joys it finds a taste,
 A taste in tears and torture of broken hearts,
 In the crown of gold and in the crown of thorns,
 In life's nectar of sweetness and its bitter wine.
 All being it explores for unknown bliss,
 Sounds all experience for things new and strange.
 Life brings into the earthly creature's days
 A tongue of glory from a higher sphere:
 It deepens in his musings and his Art,
 It leaps at the splendour of some perfect word,
 It exults in his high resolves and noble deeds,
 Wanders in his errors, dares the abyss's brink,
 It climbs in his climbings, wallows in his fall.
 Angel and demon brides his chamber share,
 Possessors or competitors for life's heart.
 To the enjoyer of the cosmic scene
 His greatness and his littleness equal are,
 His magnanimity and meanness hues
 Cast on some neutral background of the gods:
 The Artist's skill he admires who made the plan,
 But not for ever endures this danger game:
 Beyond the earth, but meant for delivered earth,
 Wisdom and joy prepare their perfect crown:
 Truth superhuman calls to thinking man.
 At last the soul turns to eternal things,
 In every shrine it cries for the clasp of God.
 Then is there played the crowning Mystery,

SAVITRI

Then is achieved the longed-for miracle.
 Immortal bliss her wide celestial eyes
 Opens on the stars, she stirs her mighty limbs;
 Time thrills to the sapphics of her amour song
 And Space fills with a white beatitude.
 Then leaving to its grief the human heart,
 Abandoning speech and the name-determined realms,
 Through a gleaming far-seen sky of wordless thought,
 Through naked thought-free heavens of absolute sight,
 She climbs to the summits where the unborn Idea
 Remembering the future that must be
 Looks down upon the works of labouring Force,
 Immutable above the world it made.
 In the vast golden laughter of Truth's sun
 Like a great heaven-bird on a motionless sea
 Is poised her winged ardour of creative joy
 On the still deep of the Eternal's peace.
 This was the aim, this the supernal Law,
 Nature's allotted task when beauty-drenched
 In dim mist waters of inconscient sleep,
 Out of the Void this grand creation rose,—
 For this the Spirit came into the Abyss
 And charged with its power Matter's unknowing Force,
 In Night's bare session to cathedral light
 In Death's realm repatriate immortality.
 A mystic slow transfiguration works.
 All our earth starts from mud and ends in sky,
 And Love that was once an animal's desire,
 Then a sweet madness in the rapturous heart,
 An ardent comradeship in the happy mind,
 Becomes a wide spiritual yearning's space.
 A lonely soul passions for the Alone,
 The heart that loved man thrills to the love of God,
 A body is his chamber and his shrine.
 Then is our being rescued from separateness;
 All is itself, all is new-felt in God:
 A Lover leaning from his cloister's door
 Gathers the whole world into his single breast.
 Then shall the business fail of Night and Death:
 When unity is won, when strife is lost

And all is known and all is clasped by Love
Who would turn back to ignorance and pain?
O Death, I have triumphed over thee within;
I quiver no more with the assault of grief;
A mighty calmness seated deep within
Has occupied my body and my sense:
It takes the world's grief and transmutes to strength,
It makes the world's joy one with the joy of God.
My love eternal sits throned on God's calm;
For Love must soar beyond the very heavens
And find its secret sense ineffable;
It must change its human ways to ways divine,
Yet keep its sovereignty of earthly bliss.
O Death, not for my heart's sweet poignancy
Nor for my happy body's bliss alone
I have claimed from thee the living Satyavan,
But for his work and mine, our sacred charge.
Our lives are God's messengers beneath the stars;
To dwell under death's shadow they have come
Tempting God's light to earth for the ignorant race,
His Love to fill the hollow in men's hearts,
His bliss to heal the unhappiness of the world.
For I the Woman am the force of God,
He the Eternal's delegate sole in man.
My will is greater than thy law, O Death;
My love is stronger than the bonds of Fate:
Our love is the heavenly seal of the Supreme.
I guard that seal against thy rending hands.
Love must not cease to live upon the earth;
For Love is the bright link twixt earth and heaven,
Love is the far Transcendent's angel here;
Love is man's lien on the Absolute."
But to the woman Death the god replied,
With the ironic laughter of his voice
Discouraging the labour of the stars:
"Even so men cheat the Truth with splendid thoughts.
Thus wilt thou hire the glorious charlatan Mind,
To weave from his Ideal's gossamer air
A fine raiment for thy body's nude desires
And thy heart's clutching greedy passion clothe?"

SAVITRI

Daub not the web of life with magic hues:
 Make rather thy thought a plain and faithful glass
 Reflecting Matter and mortality,
 And know thy soul a product of the flesh,
 A made-up self in a constructed world.
 Thy words are large murmurs in a mystic dream.
 For how in the soiled heart of man could dwell
 The inarticulate grandeur of thy dream-built God,
 Or who can see a face and form divine
 In the naked two-legged worm thou callest man?
 O human face, put off mind-painted masks:
 The animal be, the worm that Nature meant;
 Accept thy futile birth, thy narrow life.
 For truth is bare like stone and hard like death;
 Bare in the bareness, hard with truth's hardness live."
 But Savitri replied to the dire God:
 "Yes, I am human. Yet shall man by me,
 Since in humanity waits his hour the God,
 Trample thee down to reach the immortal heights,
 Transcending grief and pain and fate and death.
 Yes, my humanity is a mask of God:
 He dwells in me, the mover of my acts,
 Turning the great wheel of his cosmic work.
 I am the living body of his light,
 I am the thinking instrument of his power,
 I incarnate Wisdom in an earthly breast,
 I am his conquering and unslayable Will.
 The formless Spirit drew in me its shape;
 In me are the Nameless and the secret Name."
 Death from the incredulous Darkness sent its cry:
 "O priestess in Imagination's house,
 Persuade first Nature's fixed immutable laws
 And make the impossible thy daily work.
 How canst thou force to wed two eternal foes?
 Irreconcilable in their embrace
 They cancel the glory of their pure extremes:
 An unhappy wedlock maims their stunted force.
 How shall thy will make one the true and false?
 Where Matter is all, there Spirit is a dream:
 If all are the Spirit, Matter is a lie,

And who was the liar who forged the universe?
The Real with the unreal cannot mate.
He who would turn to God must leave the world;
He who would live in the Spirit, must give up life;
He who has met the Self, renounces self.
The voyagers of the million routes of mind
Who have travelled through Existence to its end,
Sages exploring the world-ocean's vasts,
Have found extinction the sole harbour safe.
Two only are the doors of man's escape,
Death of his body Matter's gate to peace,
Death of his soul his last felicity.
In me all take refuge, for I, Death, am God."
But Savitri replied to mighty Death:
"My heart is wiser than the Reason's thoughts,
My heart is stronger than thy bonds, O Death.
It sees and feels the one Heart beat in all,
It feels the high Transcendent's sunlike hands,
It sees the cosmic Spirit at its work;
In the dim Night it lies alone with God.
My heart's strength can carry the grief of the universe
And never falter from its luminous track,
Its white tremendous orbit through God's peace.
It can drink up the sea of All-Delight
And never lose the white spiritual touch,
The calm that broods in the deep Infinite."
He said, "Art thou indeed so strong, O heart,
O soul, so free? And canst thou gather then
Bright pleasure from my wayside flowering boughs,
Yet falter not from thy hard journey's goal,
Meet the world's dangerous touch and never fall?
Show me thy strength and freedom from my laws."
But Savitri answered, "Surely I shall find
Among the green and whispering woods of Life
Close-bosomed pleasures, only mine since his,
Or mine for him, because our joys are one.
And if I linger, Time is ours and God's,
And if I fall, is not his hand near mine?
All is a single plan; each wayside act
Deepens the soul's response, brings nearer the goal."

SAVITRI

Death the contemptuous Nihil answered her:
 "So prove thy absolute force to the wise gods,
 By choosing earthly joy! For self demand
 And yet from self and its gross masks live free.
 Then will I give thee all thy soul desires,
 All the brief joys earth keeps for mortal hearts.
 Only the one dearest wish that outweighs all,
 Hard laws forbid and thy ironic Fate.
 My will once wrought remains unchanged through Time,
 And Satyavan can never again be thine."
 But Savitri replied to the vague Power:
 "If the eyes of Darkness can look straight at Truth,
 Look at my heart and, knowing what I am,
 Give what thou wilt or what thou must, O Death.
 Nothing I claim but Satyavan alone."
 There was a hush as if of doubtful fates.
 As one disdainful still who yields a point,
 Death bowed his sovereign head in cold assent:
 "I give to thee, saved from death and poignant fate
 Whatever once the living Satyavan
 Desired in his heart for Savitri.
 Bright noons I give thee and unwounded dawns,
 Daughters of thy own shape in heart and mind,
 Fair hero sons and sweetness undisturbed
 Of union with thy husband dear and true.
 And thou shalt harvest in thy joyful house
 Felicity of thy surrounded eves.
 Love shall bind by thee many gathered hearts.
 The opposite sweetness in thy days shall meet
 Of tender service to thy life's desired
 And loving empire over all thy loved,
 Two poles of bliss made one, O Savitri.
 Return, O child, to thy forsaken earth."
 But Savitri replied, "Thy gifts resist.
 Earth cannot flower if lonely I return."
 Then Death once more sent forth his angry cry,
 As chides a lion his escaping prey:
 "What knowst thou of earth's rich and changing life
 Who thinkst that, one man dead, all joy must cease?
 Hope not to be unhappy till the end:

For grief dies soon in the tired human heart;
 Soon other guests the empty chambers fill.
 Transient painting on a holiday's floor
 Traced for a moment's beauty love was made.
 Or if a voyager on the eternal trail,
 Its objects fluent change in its embrace
 Like waves to a swimmer upon infinite seas."
 But Savitri replied to the vague God,
 "Give me back Satyavan, my only Lord.
 Thy thoughts are vacant to my soul that feels
 The deep eternal truth in transient things."
 Death answered her, "Return and try thy soul!
 Soon shalt thou find appeased that other men
 On lavish earth have beauty, strength and truth,
 And when thou hast half forgotten, one of these
 Shall wind himself around thy heart that needs
 Some human answering heart against thy breast;
 For who, being mortal, can dwell glad alone?
 Then Satyavan shall glide into the past,
 A gentle memory pushed away from thee
 By new love and thy children's tender hands,
 Till thou shalt wonder if thou lov'dst at all.
 Such is the life earth's travail has conceived,
 A constant stream that never is the same."
 But Savitri replied to mighty Death:
 "O dark ironic critic of God's work,
 Thou mockst the mind and body's faltering search
 For what the heart holds in a prophet hour
 And the immortal spirit shall make its own.
 Mine is a heart that worshipped, though forsaken,
 The image of the god its love adored;
 I have burned in flame to travel in his steps.
 Are we not they who bore vast solitude
 Seated upon the hills alone with God?
 Why dost thou vainly strive with me, O Death,
 A mind delivered from all twilight thoughts,
 To whom the secrets of the gods are plain?
 For now at last I know beyond all doubt,
 The great stars burn with my unceasing fire
 And life and death are both its fuel made.

SAVITRI

Life only was my blind attempt to love:
 Earth saw my struggle, heaven my victory;
 All shall be seized, transcended; there shall kiss
 Casting their veils before the marriage fire
 The eternal bridegroom and eternal bride.
 The heavens accept our broken flights at last.
 On our life's prow that breaks the waves of Time
 No signal light of hope has gleamed in vain."
 She spoke; the boundless members of the god
 As if by secret ecstasy assailed
 Shuddered in silence as obscurely stir
 Ocean's dim fields delivered to the moon.
 Then lifted up as by a sudden wind
 Around her in that vague and glimmering world
 The twilight trembled like a bursting veil.
 Thus with armed speech the great opponents strove.
 Around those spirits in the glittering mist
 A deepening half-light fled with pearly wings
 As if to reach some far ideal Morn.
 Outlined her thoughts flew through the gleaming haze
 Mingling bright-pinioned with its lights and veils
 And all her words like dazzling jewels caught
 Into the glow of a mysterious world
 Or tricked in the rainbow shifting of its hues
 Like echoes swam fainting into far sound.
 All utterance, all mood must there become
 An unenduring tissue sewn by mind
 To make a gossamer robe of beautiful change.
 Intent upon her silent will she walked
 On the dim grass of vague unreal plains,
 A floating veil of visions in her front,
 A trailing robe of dreams behind her feet.
 But now her spirit's flame of conscient force
 Retiring from a sweetness without fruit
 Called back her thoughts from speech to sit within
 In a deep room in meditation's house.
 For only there could dwell the soul's firm truth:
 Imperishable, a tongue of sacrifice,
 It flamed unquenched upon the central hearth
 Where burns for the high house-lord and his mate

The homestead's sentinel and witness fire
From which the altars of the gods are lit.
All still compelled went gliding on unchanged,
Still was the order of these worlds reversed:
The mortal led, the god and spirit obeyed
And she behind was leader of their march
And they in front were followers of her will.
Onward they journeyed through the drifting ways
Vaguely companioned by the glimmering mists;
But faster now all fled as if perturbed
Escaping from the clearness of her soul.
A heaven bird upon jewelled wings of wind
Borne like a coloured and embosomed fire,
By spirits carried in a pearl-hued cave,
On through the enchanted dimness moved her soul.
Death walked in front of her and Satyavan,
In the dark front of death, a failing star.
Above was the unseen balance of his fate.

CANTO FOUR

THE DREAM TWILIGHT OF THE EARTHLY REAL

THERE came a slope that slowly downward sank;
 It slipped towards a stumbling grey descent.
 The dim-heart marvel of the ideal was lost;
 Its crowding wonder of bright delicate dreams
 And vague half-limned sublimities she had left:
 Thought fell towards lower levels; hard and tense
 It passioned for some crude reality.
 The twilight floated still but changed its hues
 And heavily swathed a less delightful dream;
 It settled in tired masses on the air;
 Its symbol colours tuned with duller reds
 And almost seemed a lurid mist of day.
 A straining taut and dire besieged her heart;
 Heavy her sense grew with a dangerous load,
 And sadder, greater sounds were in her ears,
 And through stern breakings of the lambent glare
 Her vision caught a hurry of driving plains
 And cloudy mountains and wide tawny streams,
 And cities climbed in minarets and towers
 Towards an unavailing changeless sky:
 Long quays and ghauts and harbours white with sails
 Challenged her sight awhile and then were gone.
 Amidst them travailed toiling multitudes
 In ever shifting perishable groups,
 A foiled cinema of lit shadowy shapes
 Enveloped in the grey mantle of a dream.
 Imagining meanings in life's heavy drift,
 They trusted in the uncertain environment
 And waited for death to change their spirit's scene.
 A savage din of labour and a tramp

Of armoured life and the monotonous hum
 Of thoughts and acts that ever were the same,
 As if the dull reiterated drone
 Of a great brute machine, beset her soul,—
 A grey dissatisfied rumour like a ghost
 Of the moaning of a loud unquiet sea.
 A huge inhuman Cyclopean voice,
 A Babel-builder's song towering to heaven,
 A throb of engines and the clang of tools
 Brought the deep undertone of labour's pain.
 As when pale lightnings tear a tortured sky,
 High overhead a cloud-rimmed series flared
 Chasing like smoke from a red funnel driven,
 The forced creations of an ignorant Mind:
 Drifting she saw like pictured fragments flee
 Phantoms of human thought and baffled hopes,
 The shapes of Nature and the arts of man,
 Philosophies and disciplines and laws,
 And the dead spirit of old societies,
 Constructions of the Titan and the worm.
 As if lost remnants of forgotten light,
 Before her mind there fled with trailing wings
 Dimmed revelations and delivering words,
 Emptied of their mission and their strength to save,
 The messages of the evangelist gods,
 Voices of prophets, scripts of vanishing creeds.
 Each in its hour eternal claimed went by:
 Ideals, systems, sciences, poems, crafts
 Tireless there perished and again recurred,
 Sought restlessly by some creative Power.
 But all were dreams crossing an empty vast.
 Ascetic voices called of lonely seers
 On mountain summits or on river banks
 Or from the desolate heart of forest glades
 Seeking heaven's rest or the spirit's worldless peace,
 Or in bodies motionless like statues, fixed
 In tranced cessations of their sleepless thought
 Sat sleeping souls, and this too was a dream.
 All things the past has made and slain were there,
 Its lost forgotten forms that once had lived,

SAVITRI

And all the present loves as new-revealed
 And all the hopes the future brings had failed
 Already, caught and spent in efforts vain,
 Repeated fruitlessly age after age.
 Unwearied all returned insisting still
 Because of joy in the anguish of pursuit
 And joy to labour and to win and lose
 And joy to create and keep and joy to kill.
 The rolling cycles passed and came again,
 Brought the same toils and the same barren end,
 Forms ever new and ever old, the long
 Appalling revolutions of the world.

Once more arose the great destroying Voice:
 Across the fruitless labour of the worlds
 His huge denial's all-defeating might
 Pursued the ignorant march of dolorous Time.
 "Behold the figures of this symbol realm,
 Its solid outlines of creative dream
 Inspiring the great concrete tasks of earth.
 In its motion parable of human life
 Here thou canst trace the outcome Nature gives
 To the sin of being and the error in things
 And the desire that compels to live
 And man's incurable malady of hope.
 In an immutable order's hierarchy
 Where Nature changes not, man cannot change:
 Ever he obeys her fixed mutation's law;
 In a new version of her oft-told tale
 In ever-wheeling cycles turns the race.
 His mind is pent in circling boundaries:
 For mind is man, beyond thought he cannot soar.
 If he could leave his limits he would be safe:
 He sees but cannot mount to his greater heavens;
 Even winged, he sinks back to his native soil.
 He is a captive in his net of mind
 And beats soul-wings against the walls of life.
 In vain his heart lifts up its yearning prayer,
 Peopling with brilliant Gods the formless Void;
 Then disappointed to the Void he turns

And in its happy nothingness asks release,
The calm Nirvana of his dream of self:
The Word in silence ends, in Nought the name.
Apart amid the mortal multitudes,
He calls the Godhead incommunicable
To be the lover of his lonely soul
Or casts his spirit into its void embrace,
Or he finds his copy in the impartial All;
He imparts to the Immobile his own will,
Attributes to the Eternal wrath and love
And to the Ineffable lends a thousand names.
Hope not to call God down into his life:
How shalt thou bring the Everlasting here?
There is no house for him in hurrying Time.
Vainly thou seek'st in Matter's world an aim;
No aim is there, only a will to be.
All walk by Nature bound for ever the same.
Look on these forms that stay awhile and pass,
These lives that long and strive, then are no more,
These structures that have no abiding truth,
The saviour creeds that cannot save themselves,
But perish in the strangling hands of the years,
Discarded from man's thought, proved false by Time,
Philosophies that strip all problems bare
But nothing ever have solved since earth began,
And sciences omnipotent in vain
By which men learn of what the suns are made,
Transform all forms to serve their outward needs,
Ride through the sky and sail beneath the sea,
But learn not what they are or why they came;
These polities, architectures of man's brain,
That, bricked with evil and good, wall in man's spirit
And, fissured houses, palace at once and jail,
Rot while they reign and crumble before they crash;
These revolutions, demon or drunken god,
Convulsing the wounded body of mankind
Only to paint in new colours an old face;
These wars, carnage triumphant, ruin gone mad,
The work of centuries vanishing in an hour,
The blood of the vanquished and the victor's crown

SAVITRI

Which men to be born must pay for with their pain,
 The hero's face divine on satyr's limbs,
 The demon's grandeur mixed with the demi-god's,
 The glory and the beasthood and the shame;
 Why is it all, the labour and the din,
 The transient joys, the timeless sea of tears,
 The longing and the hoping and the cry,
 The battle and the victory and the fall,
 The aimless journey that can never pause,
 The waking toil, the incoherent sleep?
 Song, shouts and weeping, wisdom and idle words,
 The laughter of men, the irony of the gods?
 Where leads the march, whither the pilgrimage?
 Who keeps the map of the route or planned each stage?
 Or else self-moved the world walks its own way?
 Or nothing is there but only a Mind that dreams:
 The world is a myth that happened to come true,
 A legend told to itself by conscious Mind,
 Imaged and played on a feigned Matter's ground
 On which it stands in an unsubstantial Vast.
 Mind is the author, spectator, actor, stage:
 Mind only is and what it thinks is seen.
 If Mind is all, renounce the hope of bliss;
 If Mind is all, renounce the hope of Truth.
 For Mind can never touch the body of Truth
 And Mind can never see the soul of God;
 Only his shadow it grasps nor hears his laugh
 As it turns from him to the vain seeming of things.
 Mind is a tissue woven of light and shade
 Where right and wrong have sewn their mingled parts;
 Or Mind is Nature's marriage of covenant
 Between truth and falsehood, between joy and pain:
 This struggling pair no court can separate.
 Each thought is a gold coin with bright alloy
 And error and truth are its obverse and reverse:
 This is the imperial mintage of the brain
 And of this kind is all its currency.
 Think not to plant on earth the living Truth
 Or make of Matter's world the home of God;
 Truth comes not there but only the thought of Truth,

BOOK X CANTO IV

God is not there but only the name of God.
 If Self there is, it is bodiless and unborn;
 It is no one and it is possessed by none,
 On what shalt thou then build thy happy world?
 Cast off thy life and mind, then art thou Self,
 An all-seeing Omnipresence stark, alone,
 If God there is he cares not for the world;
 All things he sees with calm indifferent gaze,
 He has doomed all hearts to sorrow and desire,
 He has bound all life with his implacable laws;
 He answers not the ignorant voice of prayer.
 Eternal while the ages toil beneath,
 Unmoved, untouched by aught that he has made,
 He sees as minute details mid the stars
 The animal's agony and the fate of man:
 Immeasurably wise, he exceeds thy thought;
 His solitary joy needs not thy love.
 His truth in human thinking cannot dwell:
 If thou desirest truth then still thy mind
 For ever, slain by the dumb unseen Light.
 Immortal bliss lives not in human air:
 How shall the mighty Mother her calm delight
 Keep fragrant in this narrow fragile vase
 Or lodge her sweet unbroken ecstasy
 In hearts which earthly sorrow can assail
 And bodies careless Death can slay at will?
 Dream not to change the world that God has planned,
 Strive not to alter his eternal law.
 If heavens there are whose gates are shut to grief,
 There seek the joy thou couldst not find on earth;
 Or in the imperishable hemisphere
 Where Light is native and Delight is king
 And Spirit is the deathless ground of Things,
 Choose thy high station, child of Eternity.
 If thou art Spirit and Nature is thy robe,
 Cast off thy garb and be thy naked self
 Immutable in its undying truth,
 Alone for ever in the mute Alone.
 Turn then to God, for him leave all behind;
 Forgetting Love, forgetting Satyavan,

SAVITRI

Annul thyself in his immobile peace.
 O soul, drown in his still beatitude.
 For thou must die to thyself to reach God's height:
 I, Death, am the gate of immortality."
 But Savitri answered to the sophist God:
 "Once more wilt thou call Light to blind Truth's eyes,
 Make knowledge a catch of the snare of Ignorance
 And the Word a dart to slay my living Soul?
 Offer, O king, thy boons to tired spirits
 And hearts that could not bear the wounds of Time,
 Let those who were tied to body and to mind,
 Tear off those bonds and flee into white calm
 Crying for a refuge from the play of God,
 Surely thy boons are great since thou art He!
 But how shall I seek rest in endless peace
 Who house the mighty Mother's violent force,
 Her vision turned to read the enigmaed world,
 Her will tempered in the blaze of Wisdom's sun
 And the flaming silence of her heart of love?
 The world is a spiritual paradox
 Invented by a need in the Unseen,
 A poor translation to the creature's sense
 Of That which for ever exceeds idea and speech,
 A symbol of what can never be symbolised,
 A language mispronounced, misspelt, yet true.
 Its powers have come from the eternal heights
 And plunged into the inconscient dim Abyss
 And risen from it to do their marvellous work.
 The soul is a figure of the Unmanifest,
 The mind labours to think the Unthinkable,
 The life to call the Immortal into birth,
 The body to enshrine the Illimitable.
 The world is not cut off from Truth and God.
 In vain thou hast dug the dark unbridgeable gulf,
 In vain thou hast built the blind and doorless wall:
 Man's soul crosses through thee to Paradise,
 Heaven's sun forces its way through death and night;
 Its light is seen upon our being's verge.
 My mind is a torch lit from the eternal sun,
 My life a breath drawn by the immortal Guest,

My mortal body is the Eternal's house,
Already the torch becomes the undying ray,
Already the life is the Immortal's force,
The house grows of the householder part and one.
How sayst thou Truth can never light the human mind
And Bliss can never invade the mortal's heart
Or God descend into the world he made?
If in the meaningless Void creation rose,
If from a bodiless Force Matter was born,
If Life could climb in the unconscious tree,
If green delight break into emerald leaves
And its laughter of beauty blossom in the flower,
If sense could wake in tissue, nerve and cell,
And Thought seize the grey matter of the brain,
And soul peep from its secrecy through the flesh,
How shall the nameless light not leap on men,
And unknown powers emerge from Nature's sleep?
Even now hints of a luminous Truth like stars
Arise in the mind-mooned splendour of Ignorance;
Even now the deathless Lover's touch we feel:
If the chamber's door is even a little ajar,
What then can hinder God from stealing in
Or who forbid his kiss on the sleeping soul?
Already God is near, the Truth is close:
Because the dark atheist body knows him not,
Must the sage deny the Light, the seer his soul?
I am not bound by thought or sense or shape;
I live in the glory of the Infinite,
I am near to the Nameless and Unknowable,
The Ineffable is now my household mate.
But standing on Eternity's luminous brink
I have discovered that the world was He;
I have met Spirit with spirit, Self with self,
But I have loved too the body of my God.
I have pursued him in his earthly form.
A lonely freedom cannot satisfy
A heart that has grown one with every heart:
I am a deputy of the aspiring world,
My spirit's liberty I ask for all."

SAVITRI

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BOOK X CANTO IV

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SAVITRI

Then rang again a deeper cry of Death.
 As if beneath its weight of sterile law
 Oppressed by its own obstinate meaningless will,
 Disdainful, weary and compassionate,
 It kept no more its old intolerant sound,
 But seemed like life's in her unnumbered paths,
 Toiling for ever and achieving nought
 Because of birth and change, her mortal powers
 By which she lasts, around the term posts fixed
 Turning of a wide circling aimless race
 Whose course for ever speeds and is the same.
 In its long play with Fate and Chance and Time
 Assured of the game's vanity lost or won,
 Crushed by its load of ignorance and doubt
 Which knowledge seems to increase and growth to enlarge,
 The earth-mind sinks and it despairs and looks
 Old, weary and discouraged on its work.
 Yet was all nothing then or vainly achieved?
 Some great thing has been done, some light, some power
 Delivered from the huge Inconscient's grasp:
 It has emerged from night; it sees its dawns
 Circling for ever though no dawn can stay.
 This change was in the godhead's far-flung voice;
 His form of dread was altered and admitted
 Our transient effort at eternity,
 Yet flung vast doubts of what might else have been
 On grandiose hints of an impossible day.
 The great voice surging cried to Savitri:
 "Because thou knowst the wisdom that transcends
 Both veil of forms and the contempt of forms,
 Arise delivered by the seeing gods.
 If free thou hadst kept thy mind from life's fierce stress,
 Thou mightst have been like them omniscient, calm.
 But the violent and passionate heart forbids.
 It is the storm bird of an anarchy Power
 That would upheave the world and tear from it
 The indecipherable scroll of Fate,
 Death's rule and Law and the unknowable Will.
 Hasteners to action, violators of God
 Are these great spirits who have too much love,

BOOK X CANTO IV

And they who formed like thee, for both art thou,
 Have come into the narrow bounds of life
 With too large natures overleaping time.
 Worshippers of force who know not her recoil,
 Their giant wills compel the troubled years.
 The wise are tranquil; silent the great hills
 Rise ceaselessly towards their unreached sky,
 Seated on their unchanging base, their heads
 Dreamless in heaven's immutable domain.
 On their aspiring tops, sublime and still,
 Lifting half-way to heaven the climbing soul
 The mighty mediators stand content
 To watch the revolutions of the stars.
 Motionlessly moving with the might of earth,
 They see the ages pass and are the same.
 The wise think with the cycles, they hear the tread
 Of far-off things; patient, unmoved they keep
 Their dangerous wisdom in their depths restrained,
 Lest man's frail days into the unknown should sink
 Dragged like a ship by bound leviathan
 Into the abyss of his stupendous seas.
 Lo, how all shakes when the gods tread too near!
 All moves, is in peril, anguished, torn, upheaved.
 The hurrying aeons would stumble on too swift
 If strength from heaven surprised the imperfect earth
 And veiless knowledge smote these unfit souls.
 The deities have screened their dreadful power:
 God hides his thought and, even, he seems to err.
 Be still and tardy in the slow wise world.
 Mighty art thou with the dread goddess filled,
 To whom thou criedst at dawn in the dim woods.
 Use not thy strength like the wild Titan souls!
 Touch not the seated lines, the ancient laws,
 Respect the calm of great established things."
 But Savitri replied to the huge god:
 "What is the calm thou vauntst, O Law, O Death?
 Is it not the dull-visioned tread inert
 Of monstrous energies chained in a stark round
 Soulless and stone-eyed with mechanic dreams?
 Vain the soul's hope if changeless Law is all:

SAVITRI

Ever to the new and the unknown press on
 The speeding aeons justifying God.
 What were earth's ages if the grey restraint
 Were never broken and glories sprang not forth
 Bursting their obscure seed, while man's slow life
 Leaped hurried into sudden splendid paths
 By divine words and human gods revealed?
 Impose not upon sentient minds and hearts
 The dull fixity that binds inanimate things.
 Well is the unconscious rule for the animal breeds
 Content to live beneath the immutable yoke;
 Man turns to a nobler walk, a master path.
 I trample on thy law with living feet;
 For to arise in freedom I was born.
 If I am mighty let my force be unveiled
 Equal companion of the dateless powers,
 Or else let my frustrated soul sink down
 Unworthy of Godhead in the original sleep.
 I claim from Time my will's eternity,
 God from his moments." Death replied to her,
 "Why should the noble and immortal will
 Stoop to the petty works of transient earth,
 Freedom forgotten and the Eternal's path?
 Or is this the high use of strength and thought,
 To struggle with the bonds of death and time
 And spend the labour that might earn the gods
 And battle and bear agony of wounds
 To grasp the trivial joys that earth can guard
 In her small treasure-chest of passing things?
 Child, hast thou trodden the gods beneath thy feet
 Only to win poor shreds of earthly life
 For him thou lov'st cancelling the grand release,
 Keeping from early rapture of the heavens
 His soul the lenient deities have called?
 Are thy arms sweeter than the courts of God?"
 She answered, "Straight I trample on the road
 The strong hand hewed for me which planned our paths.
 I run where his sweet dreadful voice commands
 And I am driven by the reins of God.
 Why drew he wide his scheme of mighty worlds

BOOK X CANTO IV

Or filled infinity with his passionate breath?
 Or wherefore did he build my mortal form
 And sow in me his bright and proud desires;
 If not to achieve, to flower in me, to love,
 Carving his human image richly shaped
 In thoughts and largenesses and golden powers?
 Far Heaven can wait our coming in its calm.
 Easy the heavens were to build for God.
 Earth was his difficult matter, earth the glory
 Gave of the problem and the race and strife.
 There are the ominous masks, the terrible powers;
 There it is greatness to create the gods.
 Is not the spirit immortal and absolved
 Always, delivered from the grasp of Time?
 Why came it down into the mortal's Space?
 A charge he gave to his high spirit in man
 And wrote a hidden decree on Nature's tops.
 Freedom is this with ever seated soul,
 Large in life's limits, strong in Matter's knots,
 Building great stuff of action from the worlds
 To make fine wisdom from coarse scattered strands
 And love and beauty out of war and night,
 The wager wonderful, the game divine.
 What liberty has the soul which feels not free
 Unless stripped bare and cannot kiss the bonds
 The Lover winds around his playmate's limbs,
 Choosing his tyranny, crushed in his embrace?
 To seize him better with her boundless heart
 She accepts the limiting circle of his arms,
 Bows full of bliss beneath his mastering hands
 And laughs in his rich constraints, most bound, most free.
 This is my answer to thy lures, O Death."

Immutable, Death's denial met her cry:
 "However mighty, whatever thy secret name
 Uttered in hidden conclaves of the gods,
 Thy heart's ephemeral passion cannot break
 The iron rampart of accomplished things
 With which the great Gods fence their camp in Space.
 Whoever thou art behind thy human mask,

SAVITRĪ

Even if thou art the Mother of the worlds
 And pegg'st thy claim upon the realms of Chance,
 The cosmic Law is greater than thy will.
 Even God himself obeys the Laws he made:
 The Law abides and never can it change,
 The Person is a bubble on Time's sea.
 A forerunner of a greater Truth to come,
 Thy soul creator of its freer Law,
 Vaunting a Force behind on which it leans,
 A Light above which none but thou hast seen,
 Thou claimst the first fruits of Truth's victory.
 But what is Truth and who can find her form
 Amid the specious images of sense,
 Amid the crowding guesses of the mind
 And the dark ambiguities of a world
 Peopled with the incertitudes of Thought?
 For where is Truth and when was her footfall heard
 Amid the endless clamour of Time's mart
 And which is her voice amid the thousand cries
 That cross the listening brain and cheat the soul?
 Or is Truth aught but a high starry name,
 Or a vague and splendid word by which man's thought
 Sanctions and consecrates his nature's choice,
 The heart's wish donning knowledge as its robe,
 The cherished idea elect among the elect,
 Thought's favourite mid the children of half-light
 Who high-voiced crowd the playgrounds of the mind
 Or people its dormitories in infant sleep?
 All things hang here between God's yes and no,
 Two Powers real but to each other untrue,
 Two consort stars in the mooned night of mind
 That towards two opposite horizons gaze,
 The white head and black tail of the mystic drake,
 The swift and the lame foot, wing strong, wing broken
 Sustaining the body of the uncertain world,
 A great surreal dragon in the skies.
 Too dangerously thy high proud truth must live
 Entangled in Matter's mortal littleness.
 All in this world is true, yet all is false:
 Its thoughts into an eternal cipher run,

BOOK X CANTO IV

Its deeds swell to Time's rounded zero sum.
 Thus man at once is animal and god,
 A disparate enigma of God's mate
 Unable to free the Godhead's form within,
 A being less than himself, yet something more,
 The aspiring animal, the frustrate god,
 Yet neither beast nor deity but man,
 But man tied to the kind earth's labour strives to exceed,
 Climbing the stairs of God to higher Things.
 Objects are seemings and none knows their truth,
 Ideas are guesses of an ignorant god.
 Truth has no home in earth's irrational breast:
 Yet without reason life is a tangle of dreams,
 But reason is poised above a dim abyss
 And stands at last upon a plank of doubt.
 Eternal truth lives not with mortal men.
 Or if she dwells not within thy mortal heart,
 Show me the body of the living Truth
 Or draw for me the outline of her face
 That I too may obey and worship her.
 Then will I give thee back thy Satyavan.
 But here are only facts and steel-bound Law.
 This truth I know that Satyavan is dead
 And even thy sweetness cannot lure him back.
 No magic Truth can bring the dead to life,
 No power of earth cancel the thing once done,
 No joy of the heart can last surviving death,
 No bliss persuade the past to live again.
 But Life alone can solace the mute Void
 And fill with thought the emptiness of Time.
 Leave then thy dead, O Savitri, and live."
 The Woman answered to the mighty Shade,
 And as she spoke, mortality disappeared;
 Her Goddess self grew visible in her eyes,
 Light came a dream of heaven into her face.
 "O Death, thou too art God and yet not He,
 But only his own black shadow on his path
 As leaving the Night he takes the upward Way
 And drags with him its clinging inconscient Force.
 Of God unconscious thou art the dark head,

SAVITRI

Of his Ignorance thou art the impenitent sign,
 Of its vast tenebrous womb the natural child,
 On his immortality the sinister bar.
 All contraries are aspects of God's face.
 The Many are the innumerable One,
 The One carries the multitude in his breast;
 He is the Impersonal, inscrutable, sole,
 He is the one infinite Person seeing his world;
 The Silence bears the Eternal's great dumb seal,
 His light inspires the eternal Word;
 He is the Immobile's deep and deathless hush,
 Its white and signless blank negating calm,
 Yet stands the creator Self, the almighty Lord
 And watches his will done by the forms of gods
 And the desire that goads half-conscious man
 And the reluctant and unseeing Night.
 These wide divine extremes, these inverse powers
 Are the right and left side of the body of God;
 Existence balanced twixt two mighty arms
 Confronts the mind with unsolved abysms of Thought.
 Darkness below, a fathomless Light above,
 In Light are joined, but sundered by severing Mind
 Stand face to face, opposite, inseparable,
 Two contraries needed for his great World-task,
 Two poles whose currents wake the immense World-Force.
 In the stupendous secrecy of his Self,
 Above the world brooding with equal wings,
 He is both in one beginningless, without end:
 Transcending both, he enters the Absolute.
 His being is a mystery beyond mind,
 His ways bewilder mortal ignorance;
 The finite in its little sections parked,
 Amazed, credits not God's audacity
 Who dares to be the unimagined All
 And see and act as might one Infinite.
 Against human reason this is his offence;
 Being known to be for ever unknowable,
 To be all and yet transcend the mystic whole,
 Absolute, to lodge in a relative world of Time,
 Eternal and all-knowing, to suffer birth,

BOOK X CANTO IV

Omnipotent, to sport with Chance and Fate,
 Spirit, yet to be Matter and the Void,
 Illimitable, beyond form or name
 To dwell within a body, one and supreme
 To be animal and human and divine:
 A still deep sea, he laughs in rolling waves:
 Universal, he is all,—transcendent, none.
 To man's righteousness this is his cosmic crime,
 Almighty beyond good and evil to dwell
 Leaving the good to their fate in a wicked world
 And evil to reign in this enormous scene.
 All opposition seems and strife and chance
 An aimless labour with but scanty sense
 To eyes that see a part and miss the whole;
 The surface men scan, the depths refuse their search:
 A hybrid mystery challenges the view,
 Or a discouraging sordid miracle.
 Yet in the exact Inconscient's stark conceit,
 In the casual error of the world's ignorance
 A plan, a hidden Intelligence is glimpsed.
 There is a purpose in each stumble and fall;
 Nature's most careless lolling is a pose
 Preparing some forward step, some deep result.
 Ingenious notes plugged into a motived score,
 These million discords dot the harmonious theme
 Of the evolution's huge orchestral dance.
 A Truth supreme has forced the world to be;
 It has wrapped itself in Matter as in a shroud,
 A shroud of Death, a shroud of Ignorance.
 It compelled the suns to burn through silent Space,
 Flame-signs of its uncomprehended Thought
 In a wide brooding ether's formless muse:
 It made of Knowledge a veiled and struggling light,
 Of Being a substance nescient, dense and dumb,
 Of Bliss the beauty of an insentient world.
 In finite things the conscious Infinite dwells:
 Involved it sleeps in Matter's helpless trance,
 It rules the world from its sleeping senseless Void;
 Dreaming it throws out mind and heart and soul
 To labour crippled, bound, on the hard earth;

SAVITRI

A broken whole it works through scattered points;
 Its gleaming shards are Wisdom's diamond thoughts,
 Its shadowy reflex our ignorance.
 It starts from the mute mass in countless jets,
 It fashions a being out of brain and nerve,
 A sentient creature from its pleasures and pangs.
 A pack of feelings obscure, a dot of sense
 Survives awhile answering the shocks of life,
 Then crushed or, its force spent, leaves the dead form,
 Leaves the huge universe in which it lived
 An insignificant unconsidered guest.
 But the soul grows concealed within its house;
 It gives to the body its strength and magnificence;
 It follows aims in an ignorant aimless world,
 It lends significance to earth's meaningless life.
 A demi-god animal, came thinking man.
 He wallows in mud, yet heavenward soars in thought;
 He plays and ponders, laughs and weeps and dreams,
 Satisfies his little longings like the beast;
 He pores upon life's book with student eyes.
 Out of this tangle of intellect and sense,
 Out of the narrow scope of finite thought
 At last he wakes into spiritual mind;
 A high liberty begins and luminous room:
 He glimpses eternity, touches the infinite,
 He meets the gods in great and sudden hours,
 He feels the universe as his larger self,
 Makes space and time his opportunity
 To join the heights and depths of being in light,
 In the heart's cave speaks secretly with God.
 But these are touches and high moments lived;
 Fragments of Truth supreme have lit his soul,
 Reflections of the sun in waters still.
 A few have dared the last supreme ascent
 And break through borders of blinding light above,
 And feel a breath around of mightier air,
 Receive a vaster being's messages
 And bathe in its immense intuitive Ray.
 On summit Mind are radiant altitudes
 Exposed to the lustre of Infinity,

BOOK X CANTO IV

Outskirts and dependences of the house of Truth,
 Upraised estates of Mind and measureless.
 There man can visit but there he cannot live.
 A cosmic Thought spreads out its vastitudes;
 Its smallest parts are here philosophies
 Challenging with their detailed immensity,
 Each figuring an omniscient scheme of things.
 But higher still can climb the ascending light;
 There are vasts of vision and eternal suns,
 Oceans of an immortal luminousness,
 Flame-hills assailing heaven with their peaks,
 There dwelling all becomes a blaze of sight;
 A burning head of vision leads the mind,
 Thought trails behind it its long comet tail;
 The heart glows, an illuminate and seer,
 And sense is kindled into identity.
 A highest flight climbs to a deepest view:
 In a wide opening of its native sky
 Intuition's lightnings range in a bright pack
 Hunting all hidden truths out of their lairs,
 Its fiery edge of seeing absolute
 Cleaves into locked unknown retreats of self,
 Rummages the sky-recesses of the brain,
 Lights up the occult chambers of the heart;
 Its spear-point ictus of discovery
 Pressed on the cover of name, the screen of form,
 Strips bare the secret soul of all that is.
 Thought there has revelation's sun-bright eyes;
 The Word, a mighty and inspiring Voice,
 Enters Truth's inmost cabin of privacy
 And tears away the veil from God and life.
 Then stretches the boundless finite's last expanse,
 The cosmic empire of the Overmind,
 Time's buffer state bordering Eternity,
 Too vast for the experience of man's soul:
 All here gathers beneath one golden sky:
 The Powers that build the cosmos station take
 In its house of infinite possibility;
 Each god from there builds his own nature's world;
 Ideas are phalanxed like a group of sums;

SAVITRI

Thought crowds in masses seized by one regard;
 All Time is one body, Space a single book:
 There is the Godhead's universal gaze
 And there the boundaries of immortal Mind:
 The line that parts and joins the hemispheres
 Closes in on the labour of the Gods
 Fencing eternity from the toil of Time.
 In her glorious kingdom of eternal light
 All-ruler, ruled by none, the Truth supreme,
 Omnipotent, omniscient and alone,
 In a golden country keeps her measureless house;
 In its corridor she hears the tread that comes
 Out of the Unmanifest never to return
 Till the Unknown is known and seen by men.
 Above the stretch and blaze of cosmic Sight,
 Above the silence of the wordless Thought,
 Formless creator of immortal forms,
 Nameless, investitured with the name divine,
 Transcending Time's hours, transcending Timelessness,
 The Mighty Mother sits in lucent calm
 And holds the eternal Child upon her knees,
 Attending the day when he shall speak to Fate.
 There is the image of our future's hope;
 There is the sun for which all darkness waits,
 There is the imperishable harmony;
 The world's contradictions climb to her and are one:
 There is the Truth of which the world's truths are shreds,
 The Light of which the world's ignorance is the shade
 Till Truth draws back the shade that it has cast,
 The Love our hearts call down to heal all strife,
 The Bliss for which the world's derelict sorrows yearn:
 Thence comes the glory sometimes seen on earth,
 The visits of Godhead to the human soul,
 The Beauty and the dream on Nature's face.
 There the perfection born from eternity
 Calls to it the perfection born in Time,
 The truth of God surprising human life,
 The image of God overtaking finite shapes.
 There is a world of everlasting Light,
 In the realms of the immortal Supermind

BOOK X CANTO IV

Truth who hides here her head in mystery,
 Her riddle deemed by reason impossible
 In the stark structure of material form,
 Unenigmaed lives, unmasked her face and there
 Is Nature and the common law of things.
 There in a body made of spirit stuff,
 The hearth-stone of the everlasting Fire,
 Action translates the movements of the soul,
 Thought steps infallible and absolute
 And life is a continual worship's rite,
 A sacrifice of rapture to the One.
 A cosmic vision, a spiritual sense
 Feels all the Infinite lodged in finite form
 And seen through a quivering ecstasy of light
 Discovers the bright face of the Bodiless,
 In the truth of a moment, in the moment's soul
 Can sip the honey-wine of Eternity.
 A Spirit who is no one and innumerable,
 The one mystic infinite Person of his world
 Multiplies his myriad personality,
 On all his bodies seals his divinity's stamp
 And sits in each immortal and unique.
 The Immobile stands behind each daily act,
 A background of the movement and the scene,
 Upholding creation on its might and calm
 And change on the Immutable's deathless poise.
 The Timeless looks out from the travelling hours;
 The Ineffable puts on a robe of speech
 Where all its words are woven like magic threads
 Moving with beauty, inspiring with their gleam,
 And every thought takes up its destined place
 Recorded in the memory of the world.
 The Truth supreme, vast and impersonal
 Fits faultlessly the hour and circumstance,
 Its substance a pure gold ever the same
 But shaped into vessels for the spirit's use,
 Its gold becomes the wine jar and the vase.
 All there is a supreme epiphany:
 The All-Wonderful makes a marvel of each event,
 The All-Beautiful is a miracle in each shape;

SAVITRI

The All-Blissful smites with rapture the heart's throbs,
 A pure celestial joy is the use of sense.
 Each being there is a member of the Self,
 A portion of the million-thoughted All,
 A claimant to the timeless Unity,
 The many's sweetness, the joy of difference
 Edged with the intimacy of the One.

But who can show to thee Truth's glorious face?
 Our human words can only shadow her.
 To thought she is an unthinkable rapture of light,
 To speech a marvel inexpressible.
 O Death, if thou couldst touch the Truth supreme
 Thou wouldst grow suddenly wise and cease to be.
 If our souls could see and love and clasp God's Truth,
 Its infinite radiance would seize our hearts,
 Our being in God's image be remade
 And earthly life become the life divine."
 Then Death the last time answered Savitri:
 "If Truth supreme transcends her shadow here
 Severed by Knowledge and the climbing vasts,
 What bridge can cross the gulf that she has left
 Between her and the dream-world she has made?
 Or who could hope to bring her down to men
 And persuade to tread the harsh globe with wounded feet,
 Leaving her unapproachable glory and bliss,
 Wasting her splendour on pale earthly air?
 Is thine that strength, O beauty of mortal limbs,
 O soul who flutterest to escape my net?
 Who then art thou hiding in human guise?
 Thy voice carries the sound of infinity,
 Knowledge is with thee, Truth speaks through thy words;
 The light of things beyond shines in thy eyes.
 But where is thy strength to conquer Time and Death?
 Hast thou God's force to build heaven's values here?
 For truth and knowledge are an idle gleam,
 If Knowledge brings not power to change the world,
 If Might comes not to give to Truth her right.
 A blind Force, not Truth has made this ignorant world,
 A blind Force, not Truth orders the lives of men:
 By Power, not Light, the great Gods rule the world;

BOOK X CANTO IV

Power is the arm of God, the seal of Fate.
 O human claimant to immortality,
 Reveal thy power, lay bare thy spirit's force,
 Then will I give back to thee Satyavan.
 Or if the Mighty Mother is with thee,
 Show me her face that I may worship her;
 Let deathless eyes look into the eyes of Death,
 An imperishable Force touching brute things
 Transform earth's death into immortal life.
 Then can thy dead return to thee and live,
 The prostrate earth perhaps shall lift her gaze
 And feel near her the secret body of God
 And love and joy overtake fleeing Time."

And Savitri looked on Death and answered not.
 Almost it seemed as if in his symbol shape
 The world's darkness had consented to Heaven-light
 And God needed no more the Inconscient's screen.
 A mighty transformation came on her.
 A halo of the indwelling Deity,
 The Immortal's lustre that had lit her face
 And tented its radiance in her body's house,
 Overflowing made the air a luminous sea.
 In a flaming moment of apocalypse
 The Incarnation thrust aside its veil.
 A little figure in infinity
 Yet stood and seemed the Eternal's very house,
 As if the world's centre was her very soul
 And all wide space was but its outer robe.
 A curve of the calm hauteur of far heaven
 Descending into earth's humility,
 Her forehead's span vaulted the Omniscient's gaze,
 Her eyes were two stars that watched the universe.
 The Power that from her being's summit reigned,
 The Presence chambered in lotus secrecy,
 Came down and held the centre in her brow
 Where the mind's Lord in his control-room sits;
 There throned on concentration's native seat
 He opens that third mysterious eye in man,
 The Unseen's eye that looks at the unseen,

SAVITRI

When Light with a golden ecstasy fills his brain
 And the Eternal's wisdom drives his choice
 And eternal Will seizes the mortal's will.
 It stirred in the lotus of her throat of song,
 And in her speech throbbed the immortal Word,
 Her life sounded with the steps of the World-Soul
 Moving in harmony with the cosmic Thought.
 As glides God's sun into the mystic cave
 Where hides his light from the pursuing gods,
 It glided into the lotus of her heart
 And woke in it the Force that alters Fate.
 It poured into a navel's lotus depth,
 Lodged in the little life-nature's narrow home,
 On the body's longings grew heaven-rapture's flower
 And made desire a pure celestial flame,
 Broke into the cave where coiled World-Energy sleeps
 And smote the thousand-hooded serpent Force
 That blazing towered and clasped the World-Self above,
 Joined Matter's dumbness to the Spirit's hush
 And filled earth's acts with the Spirit's silent power.
 Thus changed she waited for the Word to speak.
 Eternity looked into the eyes of Death.
 And Darkness saw God's living Reality.
 Then a Voice was heard that seemed the stillness' self
 Or the low calm utterance of infinity
 When it speaks to the silence in the heart of sleep.
 "I hail thee almighty and victorious Death,
 Thou grandiose Darkness of the Infinite.
 O Void that makest room for all to be,
 Hunger that gnawest at the universe
 Consuming the cold remnants of the suns
 And eat'st the whole world with thy jaws of fire,
 Waster of the energy that has made the stars,
 Inconscience, carrier of the seeds of thought,
 Nescience in which All-Knowledge sleeps entombed
 And slowly emerges in its hollow breast
 Wearing the mind's mask of bright Ignorance.
 Thou art my shadow and my instrument.
 I have given thee thy awful shape of dread
 And thy sharp sword of terror and grief and pain

BOOK X CANTO IV

To force the soul of man to struggle for light
 On the brevity of his half-conscious days.
 Thou art his spur to greatness in his works,
 The whip to his yearning for eternal bliss,
 His poignant need of immortality.
 Live, Death, awhile, be still my instrument.
 One day man too shall know thy fathomless heart
 Of silence and the brooding peace of Night
 And grave obedience to eternal Law
 And the calm inflexible pity in thy gaze.
 But now, O timeless Mightiness, stand aside
 And leave the path of my incarnate Force.
 Relieve the radiant god from thy black mask;
 Release the soul of the world called Satyavan
 Freed from thy clutch of pain and ignorance
 That he may stand master of life and fate,
 Man's representative in the house of God,
 The mate of Wisdom and the spouse of Light,
 The eternal bridegroom of the eternal bride."

She spoke; Death unconvinced resisted still,
 Although he knew refusing still to know,
 Although he saw refusing still to see.
 Unshakable he stood claiming his right.
 His spirit bowed; his will obeyed the law
 Of its own nature binding even on Gods.
 The two opposed each other face to face.
 His being like a huge fort of darkness towered;
 Around it her life grew, an ocean's siege.
 Awhile the Shade survived defying heaven:
 Assailing in front, oppressing from above
 A concrete mass of conscious power, he bore
 The tyranny of her divine desire.
 A pressure of intolerable force
 Weighed on his unbowed head and stubborn breast;
 Light like a burning tongue licked up his thoughts,
 Light was a luminous torture in his heart,
 Light coursed, a splendid agony, through his nerves;
 His darkness muttered perishing in her blaze.
 Her mastering Word commanded every limb
 And left no room for his enormous will

SAVITRI

That seemed pushed out into some helpless space
 And could no more re-enter but left him void.
 He called to Night but she fell shuddering back,
 He called to Heli but sullenly it retired:
 He turned to the Inconscient for support,
 From which he was born, his vast sustaining self:
 It drew him back towards boundless vacancy
 As if by himself to swallow up himself:
 He called to his strength, but it refused his call.
 His body was eaten by light, his spirit devoured.
 At last he knew defeat inevitable
 And left crumbling the shape that he had worn,
 Abandoning hope to make man's soul his prey
 And force to be mortal the immortal spirit.
 Afar he fled shunning her dreaded touch
 And refuge took in the retreating Night.
 In the dream twilight of that symbol world
 The dire universal Shadow disappeared
 Vanishing into the Void from which it came.
 As if deprived of its original cause,
 The twilight realm passed fading from their souls,
 And Satyavan and Savitri were alone.
 But neither stirred: between those figures rose
 A mute invisible and translucent wall.
 In the long blank moment's pause nothing could move:
 All waited on the unknown inscrutable Will.

END OF BOOK TEN

BOOK ELEVEN
The Book of Everlasting Day

CANTO ONE

THE ETERNAL DAY: THE SOUL'S CHOICE AND
THE SUPREME CONSUMMATION

A MARVELLOUS sun looked down from ecstasy's skies
 On worlds of deathless bliss, perfection's home,
 Magical unfoldings of the Eternal's smile
 Capturing his secret heart-beats of delight.
 God's everlasting day surrounded her,
 Domains appeared¹ of sempiternal light
 Invading all Nature with the Absolute's joy.
 Her body quivered with eternity's touch,
 Her soul stood close to the founts of the infinite.
 Infinity's finite fronts she lived in, new
 For ever to an everlasting sight.
 Eternity multiplied its vast self-look
 Translating its endless mightiness and joy
 Into delight souls playing with Time could share
 In grandeurs ever new-born from the unknown depths,
 In powers that leaped immortal from unknown heights,
 In passionate heart-beats of an undying love,
 In scenes of a sweetness that can never fade.
 Immortal to the rapturous heart and eyes,
 In serene arches of translucent calm
 From Wonder's dream-vasts cloudless skies slid down
 An abyss of sapphire; sunlight visited eyes
 Which suffered without pain the absolute ray
 And saw immortal clarities of form.
 Twilight and mist were exiles from that air,
 Night was impossible to such radiant heavens.
 Firm in the bosom of immensity

¹Alternative: "Were there"

SAVITRI

Spiritual breadths were seen, sublimely born
 From a still beauty of creative joy;
 Embodied thoughts to sweet dimensions held
 To please some carelessness of divine peace,
 Answered the deep demand of an infinite sense
 And its need of forms to house its bodiless thrill.
 A march of universal power in Time,
 The harmonic order of self's vastitudes
 In cyclic symmetries and metric planes
 Harboured a cosmic rapture's revelry
 In an endless figuring of the spirit in things
 Planned by the artist who has dreamed the worlds;
 Of all the beauty and the marvel here,
 Of all Time's intricate variety
 Eternity was the substance and the source;
 Not from a plastic mist of Matter made,
 They offered the suggestion of their depths
 And opened the great series of their powers.
 Arisen beneath a triple mystic heaven
 The seven immortal earths were seen sublime:
 Homes of the blest released from death and sleep
 Where grief can never come nor any pang
 Arriving from self-lost and seeking worlds
 Alter Heaven-nature's changeless quietude
 And mighty posture of eternal calm,
 Its pose of ecstasy immutable.
 Plains lay that seemed the expanse of God's wide sleep,
 Thought's wings climbed up towards heaven's vast repose
 Lost in blue depths of immortality.
 A changed earth-nature felt the breath of peace.
 Air seemed an ocean of felicity
 Or the couch of the unknown spiritual rest,
 A vast quiescence swallowing up all sound
 Into a voicelessness of utter bliss;
 Even Matter brought a close spiritual touch,
 All thrilled with the immanence of one divine.
 The lowest of these earths was still a heaven
 Translating into the splendour of things divine
 The beauty and brightness of terrestrial scenes.
 Eternal mountains ridge on gleaming ridge

BOOK XI CANTO I

Whose lines were graved as on a sapphire plate
 And etched the borders of heaven's lustrous noon
 Climbed like piled temple stairs and from their heads
 Of topless meditation heard below
 The approach of a blue pilgrim multitude
 And listened to a great arriving voice
 Of the wide travel hymn of timeless seas.
 A chanting crowd from mountain bosoms slipped
 Past branches fragrant with a sigh of flowers
 Hurrying through sweetnesses with revel leaps;
 The murmurous rivers of felicity
 Divinely rippled, honey-voiced desires,
 Mingling their sister eddies of delight,
 Then, widening to a pace of calm-lipped muse
 Down many-glimmered estuaries of dream
 Went whispering into lakes of liquid peace.
 On a brink held of senseless ecstasy
 And guarding an eternal poise of thought
 Sat sculptured souls dreaming by rivers of sound
 In changeless attitudes of marble bliss.
 Around her lived the children of God's day
 In an unspeakable felicity,
 A happiness never lost, the immortal's ease,
 A glad eternity's blissful multitude.
 Around, the deathless nations moved and spoke,
 Souls of a luminous celestial joy,
 Faces of stark beauty, limbs of the moulded Ray;
 In cities cut like gems of conscious stone
 And wonderful pastures and on gleaming coasts
 Bright forms were seen, eternity's luminous tribes.
 Above her rhythming godheads whirled the spheres,
 Rapt mobile fixities here blindly sought
 By the huge erring orbits of our stars.
 Ecstatic voices smote at hearing's chords,
 Each movement found a music all its own;
 Songs thrilled of birds upon unfading boughs,
 The colours of whose plumage had been caught
 From the rainbow of imagination's wings.
 Immortal fragrance packed the quivering breeze,
 In groves that seemed moved bosoms and trembling depths

The million children of the undying spring
 Bloomed, pure unnumbered stars of hued delight
 Nestling for shelter in their emerald sky:
 Faery flower-masses looked with laughing eyes.
 A dancing chaos, an iridescent sea
 Eternised to Heaven's ever wakeful sight
 The crowding petal-glow of marvel's tints
 Which float across the curtained lids of dream.
 Immortal harmonies filled her listening ear;
 A great spontaneous utterance of the heights
 On titan wings of rhythmic grandeur borne,
 Poured from some deep spiritual heart of sound
 Strains trembling with the secrets of the gods.
 A spirit wandered happily in the wind,
 A spirit brooded in the leaf and stone;
 The voices of thought-conscious instruments
 Along a living verge of silence strayed,
 And from some deep, a wordless tongue of things
 Unfathomed, inexpressible, chantings rose
 Translating into a voice the Unknown.
 A climber on the invisible stair of sound,
 Music not with these few and striving steps
 Aspired that wander upon transient strings,
 But changed its ever new uncounted notes
 In a passion of unforeseeing discovery,
 And kept its old unforgotten ecstasies
 A growing treasure in the mystic heart.
 A consciousness that yearned through every cry
 Of unexplored attraction and desire,
 It found and searched again the unsatisfied deeps
 Hunting as if in some deep secret heart
 To find some lost or missed felicity.
 In those far-lapsing symphonies she could hear
 Breaking through enchantments of the ravished sense,
 The lyric voyage of a divine soul
 Mid spume and laughter tempting with its prow
 The charm of innocent Circean isles,
 Adventures without danger beautiful
 In lands where siren Wonder sings its lures
 From rhythmic rocks in ever-foaming seas.

BOOK XI CANTO I

In the harmony of an original sight
 Delivered from our limiting ray of thought,
 And the reluctance of our blinded hearts
 To embrace the Godhead in whatever guise,
 She saw all Nature marvellous without fault.
 Invaded by beauty's universal revel
 Her being's fibre reached out vibrating
 And claimed deep union with its outer selves,
 And on the heart's chords made pure to seize all tones
 Heaven's subtleties of touch unwearying forced
 More vivid raptures than earth's life can bear.
 What would be suffering here, was fiery bliss.
 All here but passionate hint and mystic shade
 Divined by the inner prophet who perceives
 The spirit of delight in sensuous things,
 Turned to more sweetness than can now be dreamed.
 The mighty signs of which earth fears the stress,
 Trembling because she cannot understand,
 And must keep obscure in forms strange and sublime,
 Were here the first lexicon of an infinite mind
 Translating the language of eternal bliss.
 Here rapture was a common incident;
 The lovelinesses of whose captured thrill
 Our human pleasure is a fallen thread,
 Lay, symbol shapes, a careless ornament,
 Sewn on the rich brocade of Godhead's dress.
 Things fashioned were the imaged homes where mind
 Arrived to fathom a deep physical joy;
 The heart was a torch lit from infinity,
 The limbs were trembling densities of soul.
 These were the first domains, the outer courts
 Immense but least in range and least in price,
 The slightest ecstasies of the undying gods.
 Higher her swing of vision swept and knew,
 Admitted through large sapphire opening gates
 Into the wideness of a light beyond,
 These were but sumptuous decorated doors
 To worlds nobler, more felicitously fair.
 Endless aspired the climbing of those heavens;
 Realm upon realm received her soaring view.

SAVITRI

Then on what seemed one crown of the ascent
 Where finite and the infinite are one,
 Immune she beheld the strong immortals' seats
 Who live for a celestial joy and rule
 The middle regions of the unfading Ray.
 Great forms of deities sat in deathless tiers,
 Eyes of an unborn gaze towards her leaned
 Through a transparency of crystal fire.
 In the beauty of bodies wrought from rapture's lines,
 Shapes of entrancing sweetness stilling bliss,
 Feet glimmering upon the sun-stone courts of mind,
 Heaven's cup-bearers bore round the Eternal's wine;
 A tangle of bright bodies, of moved souls
 Tracing the close and intertwined delight,
 The harmonious tread of lives for ever joined
 In the passionate oneness of a mystic joy
 As if sun-beams made living and divine,
 The golden-bosomed Apsara goddesses,
 In groves flooded from an argent disk of bliss
 That floated through a luminous sapphire dream,
 In a cloud of raiment lit with golden limbs
 And gleaming footfalls treading faery swards,
 Virgin motions of bacchant innocences
 Who know their riot for a dance of God,
 Whirled linked in moonlit revels of the heart.
 Impeccable artists of unerring forms,
 Magician builders of sound and rhythmic words,
 Wind-haired Gundhurvas chanted to the ear
 The odes that shape the universal thought,
 The lines that tear the veil from Deity's face,
 The rhythms that bring the sounds of wisdom's sea.
 Immortal figures and illumined brows,
 Our great forefathers in those splendours moved;
 Termless in power and satisfied of light,
 They enjoyed the sense of all for which we strive.
 High seers, moved poets saw the eternal thoughts
 That, travellers from on high, arrive to us
 Deformed by our search, tricked by costuming mind,
 Like gods disfigured by the pangs of birth,
 Seized the great words which now are frail sounds caught

BOOK XI CANTO I

By difficult rapture on a mortal tongue.
 The strong who stumble and sin were calm proud gods.
 There lightning-filled with glory and with flame,
 Melting in waves of sympathy and sight,
 Smitten like a lyre that throbs to others' bliss,
 Drawn by the cords of ecstasies unknown,
 Her human nature faint with heaven's delight,
 She beheld the clasp to earth denied and bore
 The imperishable eyes of veiless love,
 More climbed above, level to level reached,
 Beyond what tongue can utter or mind dream:
 Worlds of an infinite reach crowned Nature's stir.
 There was a greater tranquil sweetness there,
 A subtler and profounder ether's field
 And mightier scheme than heavenliest sense can give.
 There breath carried a stream of seeing mind,
 Form was a tenuous raiment of the soul:
 Colour was a visible tone of ecstasy;
 Shapes seen half immaterial by the gaze
 And yet voluptuously palpable
 Made sensible to touch the indwelling spirit.
 The high perfected sense illumined lived
 A happy vassal of the inner ray,
 Each feeling was the Eternal's mighty child
 And every thought was a sweet burning god.
 Air was a luminous feeling, sound a voice,
 Sunlight the soul's vision and moonlight its dream.
 On a wide living base of wordless calm
 All was a potent and a lucid joy.
 Into those heights her spirit went floating up
 Like an upsoaring bird who mounts unseen
 Voicing to the ascent his throbbing heart
 Of melody till a pause of closing wings
 Comes quivering in his last contented cry
 And he is silent with his soul discharged,
 Delivered of his heart's burden of delight.
 Experience mounted on joy's coloured breast
 To inaccessible spheres in spiral flight.
 There Time dwelt with Eternity as one;
 Immense felicity joined rapt repose.

SAVITRI

As one drowned in a sea of splendour and bliss
 Mute in the maze of these surprising worlds
 Turning she saw their living knot and source,
 Key to their charm and fount of their delight,
 And knew him for the same who snares our lives
 Captured in his terrifying pitiless net,
 And makes the universe his prison camp
 And makes in his immense and vacant vasts
 The labour of the stars a circuit vain
 And death the end of every human road
 And grief and pain the wages of man's toil.
 One whom her soul had faced as Death and Night
 A sum of all sweetness gathered into his limbs
 And blinded her heart to the beauty of the suns.
 Transfigured was the formidable shape.
 His darkness and his sad destroying might
 Abolishing for ever and disclosing
 The mystery of his high and violent deeds,
 A secret splendour rose revealed to sight
 Where once the vast embodied Void had stood.
 Night the dim mask had grown a wonderful face.
 The vague infinity was slain whose gloom
 Had outlined from the terrible Unknown
 The obscure disastrous figure of a god,
 Fled was the error that arms the hands of grief,
 And lighted the ignorant gulf whose hollow deeps
 Had given to nothingness a dreadful voice.
 As when before the eye that wakes in sleep
 Is opened the sombre binding of a book,
 Illumined letterings are seen which kept
 A golden blaze of thought inscribed within,
 A marvellous form responded to her gaze
 Whose sweetness justified life's blindest pain;
 All Nature's struggle was its easy price,
 The universe and its agony seemed worth while.
 As if the choric calyx of a flower
 Aerial, visible on music's waves,
 A lotus of light-petalled ecstasy
 Took shape out of the tremulous heart of things.
 There was no more the torment under the stars,

BOOK XI CANTO I

The evil sheltered behind Nature's mask;
 There was no more the dark pretence of hate,
 The cruel ictus on Love's altered face.
 Hate was the grip of a dreadful amour's strife;
 A ruthless love intent only to possess
 Has here replaced the sweet original god;
 Forgetting the Will-to-love that gave it birth,
 The passion to lock itself in and to unite,
 It would swallow all into one lonely self,
 Devouring the soul that it had made its own,
 By suffering and annihilation's pain
 Punishing the unwillingness to be one,
 Angry with the refusals of the world,
 Passionate to take but knowing not how to give.
 Death's sombre cowl was cast from Nature's brow;
 There lightened on her the godhead's lurking love.
 All grace and glory and all divinity
 Were here collected in a single form;
 All worshipped eyes looked through his from one face;
 He bore all godheads in his grandiose limbs.
 An oceanic spirit dwelt within;
 Intolerant and invincible in joy
 A flood of freedom and transcendent bliss
 Into immortal lines of beauty rose.
 In him the fourfold Being bore its crown
 That wears the mystery of a nameless Name,
 The universe writing its tremendous sense
 In the inexhaustible meaning of a word.
 In him the architect of the visible world,
 At once the art and artist of his works,
 Spirit and seer and thinker of things seen,
 Virât, who lights his camp-fires in the suns
 And the star-entangled ether is his hold,
 Expressed himself with Matter for his speech:
 Objects are his letters, forces are his words,
 Events are the crowded history of his life,
 And sea and land are the pages of his tale,
 Matter is his means and his spiritual sign;
 He hangs the thought upon a lash's lift,
 In the current of the blood makes flow the soul.

SAVITRI

His is the dumb will of atom and of clod;
 A Will that without sense or motive acts,
 An Intelligence needing not to think or plan,
 The world creates itself invincibly;
 For its body is the body of the Lord
 And in its heart stands Virât, King of kings.
 In him shadows his form the Golden Child
 Who in the Sun-capped Vast cradles his birth:
 Hiranyagarbha, author of thoughts and dream,
 Who sees the invisible and hears the sounds
 That never visited a mortal ear,
 Discoverer of unthought realities,
 Truer to Truth than all we have ever known,
 He is the leader on the inner roads;
 A seer, he has entered the forbidden realms;
 A magician with the omnipotent wand of thought,
 He builds the secret uncreated worlds.
 Armed with the golden speech, the diamond eye,
 His is the vision and the prophecy:
 Imagist casting the formless into shape,
 Traveller and hewer of the unseen paths,
 He is the carrier of the hidden fire,
 He is the voice of the Ineffable,
 He is the invisible hunter of the light,
 The Angel of mysterious ecstasies,
 The conqueror of the kingdoms of the soul.
 A third spirit stood behind, their hidden cause,
 A mass of superconscience closed in light,
 Creator of things in his all-knowing sleep.
 All from his stillness came as grows a tree;
 He is our seed and core, our head and base.
 All light is but a flash from his closed eyes:
 An all-wise Truth is mystic in his heart,
 The omniscient Ray is shut behind his lids:
 He is the Wisdom that comes not by thought,
 His wordless silence brings the immortal word.
 He sleeps in the atom and the burning star,
 He sleeps in man and god and beast and stone:
 Because he is there the Inconscient does its work,
 Because he is there the world forgets to die,

BOOK XI CANTO I

He is the centre of the circle of God,
 He is the circumference of Nature's run.
 His slumber is an Almightyness in things,
 Awake, he is the Eternal and Supreme.
 Above was the brooding bliss of the Infinite,
 Its omniscient and omnipotent repose,
 Its immobile silence absolute and alone.
 All powers were woven in countless concords here.
 The bliss that made the world in his body lived.
 Love and delight were the head of the sweet form,
 In the alluring meshes of their snare
 Recaptured the proud blissful members held
 All joys outrunners of the panting heart
 And fugitive from life's outstripped desire.
 Whatever vision has escaped the eye,
 Whatever happiness comes in dream and trance,
 The nectar spilled by love with trembling hands,
 The joy the cup of Nature cannot hold,
 Had crowded to the beauty of his face,
 Were waiting in the honey of his laugh.
 Things hidden by the silence of the hours,
 The ideas that find no voice on living lips,
 The soul's pregnant meeting with infinity
 Had come to birth in him and taken fire:
 The secret whisper of the flower and star
 Revealed its meaning in his fathomless look.
 His lips curved eloquent like a rose of dawn;
 His smile that played with the wonder of the mind
 And stayed in the heart when it had left his mouth
 Glimmered with the radiance of the morning star
 Gemming the wide discovery of heaven.
 His gaze was the regard of eternity;
 The spirit of its sweet and calm intent
 Was a wise home of gladness and divulged
 The light of the ages in the mirth of the hours,
 A sun of wisdom in a miracled grove.
 In the orchestral largeness of his mind
 All contrary seekings their close kinship knew,
 Rich-hearted, wonderful to each other met
 In the mutual marvelling of their myriad notes

SAVITRI

And dwelt like brothers of one family
 Who had found their common and mysterious home.
 As from the harp of some ecstatic god
 There springs a harmony of lyric bliss
 Striving to leave no heavenly joy unsung,
 Such was the life in that embodied Light.
 He seemed the wideness of a boundless sky,
 He seemed the passion of a sorrowless earth,
 He seemed the burning of a world-wide sun.
 Two looked upon each other, Soul saw Soul.

Then like an anthem from the heart's lucent cave
 A voice soared up whose magic sound could turn
 The poignant weeping of the earth to sobs
 Of rapture and her cry to spirit song:
 "O human image of the deathless word,
 How hast thou seen beyond the topaz walls
 The gleaming sisters of the divine gate,
 Summoned the genii of their wakeful sleep,
 And under revelation's arches forced
 The carved thought-shrouded doors to swing apart,
 Unlocked the avenues of spiritual sight
 And taught¹ the entries of a heavenlier state
 To thy rapt soul that bore the golden key?
 In thee the secret sight man's blindness missed
 Has opened its view past Time, my chariot course,
 And death, my tunnel which I drive through life
 To reach my unseen distances of bliss.
 I am the hushed search of the jealous gods
 Pursuing my wisdom's vast mysterious work
 Seized in the thousand meeting ways of heaven.
 I am the beauty of the unveiled Ray
 Drawing through the deep roads of the infinite night
 The unconquerable pilgrim soul of earth
 Beneath the flaring torches of the stars.
 I am the inviolable Ecstasy;
 They who have looked on me, shall grieve no more.
 The eyes that live in night shall see my form.

¹ Alternative : "Vistaed"

BOOK XI CANTO I

On the pale shores of conscious foaming straits
 That flow beneath a grey tormented sky
 Two powers from one original ecstasy born
 Pace near, but parted in the life of man;
 One leans to earth, the other yearns to the skies:
 Heaven in its rapture dreams of perfect earth,
 Earth in its sorrow dreams of perfect heaven.
 The two longing to join, yet walk apart,
 Idly divided by their vain conceits;
 They are kept from their oneness by enchanted fears;
 Sundered mysteriously by miles of thought,
 They gaze across the silent gulfs of sleep.
 Or side by side reclined upon my vasts
 Like bride and bridegroom magically divorced
 They wake to yearn, but never can they clasp
 While thinly flickering hesitates uncrossed
 Between the lovers on their nuptial couch
 The shadowy eidolon of a sword.
 But when the phantom flame-edge fails undone,
 Then never more can space or time divide
 The lover from the loved; space shall draw back
 Her great translucent curtain. Time shall be
 The quivering of the spirit's endless bliss.
 Attend that moment of celestial fate.
 Meanwhile you two shall serve the dual law
 Which only now the scouts of vision glimpse
 Who pressing through the forest of their thoughts
 Have found the narrow bridges of the gods.
 Wait patient of the brittle bars of form
 Making division your delightful means
 Of happy oneness rapturously enhanced
 By attraction in the throbbing air between.
 Yet if thou wouldst abandon the vexed world
 Careless of the dark moan of things below,
 Tread down the isthmus, overleap the flood,
 Cancel thy contract with the labouring Force,
 Renounce the tie that joins thee to earth-kind,
 Cast off thy sympathy with mortal hearts.
 Arise, vindicate thy spirit's conquered right:
 Relinquishing thy charge of transient breath,

SAVITRI

Under the cold gaze of the indifferent stars
 Leaving thy borrowed body on the sod,
 Ascend, O soul, into thy blissful home.
 Here in the playground of the eternal Child
 Or in domains the wise Immortals tread
 Roam with thy comrade splendour under skies
 Spiritual lit by an unsetting sun,
 As godheads live who care not for the world
 And share not in the toil of Nature's powers:
 Absorbed in their self-ecstasy they dwell.
 Cast off the ambiguous myth of earth's desire,
 O immortal to felicity arise."

On Savitri listening in her tranquil heart
 To the harmony of the ensnaring voice
 A joy exceeding earth's and heaven's poured down
 The bliss of an unknown eternity,
 A rapture from some waiting Infinite.
 A smile came rippling out in her wide eyes,
 Its confident felicity's messenger
 As if the first beam of the morning sun
 Rippled along two wakened lotus-pools:
 "O besetter of man's soul with life and death
 And the world's pleasure and pain and Day and Night,
 Tempting his heart with the far lure of heaven,
 Testing his strength with the close touch of hell,
 I climb not to thy everlasting Day,
 Even as I have shunned thy eternal Night.
 To me who turn not from thy terrestrial Way,
 Give back the other self my nature asks,
 Thy spaces need him not to help their joy;
 Earth needs his beautiful spirit made by thee
 To fling delight down like a net of gold.
 Earth is the chosen place of mightiest souls;
 Earth is the heroic spirit's battlefield,
 The forge where the Arch-mason shapes his works.
 Thy servitudes on earth are greater, king,
 Than all the glorious liberties of heaven.
 The heavens were once to me my natural home,
 I too have wandered in star-jewelled groves,

BOOK XI CANTO I

Paced sun-gold pastures and moon-silver swords
 And heard the harping laughter of their streams
 And lingered under branches dropping myrrh;
 I too have revelled in the fields of light
 Touched by the ethereal raiment of the winds,
 Thy wonder-rounds of music I have trod,
 Lived in the rhyme of bright unlabouring thoughts,
 I have beat swift harmonies of rapture vast,
 Danced in spontaneous measures of the soul
 The great and easy dances of the gods.
 Oh, fragrant are the lanes thy children walk
 And lovely is the memory of their feet
 Amid the wonder-flowers of Paradise:
 A heavier tread is mine, a mightier touch.
 There where the gods and demons battle in night
 Or wrestle on the borders of the Sun,
 Taught by the sweetness and the pain of life
 To bear the uneven strenuous beat that throbs
 Against the edge of some divinest hope,
 To dare the impossible with these pangs of search,
 In me the spirit of immortal love
 Stretches its arms out to embrace mankind.
 Too far thy heavens for me from suffering men.
 Imperfect is the joy not shared by all.
 Oh to spread forth, oh to encircle and seize
 More hearts till love in us has filled thy world!
 O life, the life beneath the wheeling stars
 For victory in the tournament with death,
 For bending of the fierce and difficult bow,
 For flashing of the splendid sword of God!
 O thou who soundest the trumpet in the lists,
 Part not the handle from the untried steel,
 Take not the warrior with his blow unstruck.
 Are there not still a million fights to wage?
 O King-smith, clang on still thy toil begun,
 Weld us to one in thy strong smithy of life.
 Thy fine-curved jewelled hilt call Savitri,
 Thy blade's exultant smile name Satyavan.
 Fashion to beauty, point us through the world.
 Break not the lyre before the song is found;

SAVITRI

Are there not still unnumbered chants to weave?
 O subtle-souled musician of the years,
 Play out what thou hast fluted on my stops;
 Arise from the strain their first wild plaint divined
 And that discover which is yet unsung.
 I know that I can lift man's soul to God,
 I know that he can bring the Immortal down.
 Our will labours permitted by thy will
 And without thee an empty roar of storm,
 A senseless whirlwind is the titan's force
 And without thee a snare the strength of gods.
 Let not the inconscient gulf swallow man's race
 That through earth's ignorance struggles towards the Light.
 O thunderer with the lightnings of the soul,
 Give not to darkness and to death thy sun,
 Achieve thy wisdom's hidden firm decree
 And the mandate of thy secret world-wide love."
 Her words failed lost in thought's immensities
 Which seized them at the limits of their cry
 And hid their meaning in the distances
 That stir to more than ever speech has won
 From the Unthinkable, end of all our thought,
 And the Ineffable from whom all words come.

Then with a smile august as noonday heavens
 The godhead of the vision wonderful:
 "How shall earth-nature and man's nature rise
 To the celestial levels, yet earth abide?
 Heaven and earth towards each other gaze
 Across a gulf that few can cross, none touch,
 Arriving through a vague ethereal mist
 Out of which all things form that move in space,
 The shore that all can see but never reach.
 Heaven's light visits sometimes the mind of earth;
 Its thoughts burn in her sky like lonely stars;
 In her heart there move celestial seekings soft
 And beautiful like fluttering wings of birds,
 Visions of joy that she can never win
 Traverse the fading mirror of her dreams.
 Faint seeds of light and bliss bear sorrowful flowers,

BOOK XI CANTO I

Faint harmonies caught from a half-heard song
 Fall swooning mid the wandering voices' jar,
 Foam from the tossing luminous seas where dwells
 The beautiful and far delight of gods,
 Raptures unknown, a miracled happiness
 Thrill her and pass half-shaped to mind and sense.
 Above her little finite steps she feels
 Careless of knot or pause, worlds which weave out
 A strange perfection beyond law and rule,
 A universe of self-found felicity,
 An inexpressible rhythm of timeless beats,
 The many-movemented heart-beats of the One,
 Magic of the boundless harmonies of self,
 Order of the freedom of the infinite,
 The wonder-plastics of the Absolute.
 There is the All-Truth and there the timeless bliss.
 But hers are fragments of a star-lost gleam,
 Hers are but careless visits of the gods.
 They are a Light that fails, a Word soon hushed
 And nothing they mean can stay for long on earth.
 There are high glimpses, not the lasting sight.
 A few can climb to an unperishing sun,
 Or live on the edges of the mystic moon
 And channel to earth-mind the wizard ray.
 The heroes and the demi-gods are few
 To whom the close immortal voices speak
 And to their acts the heavenly clan are near.
 Few are the silences in which Truth is heard,
 Unveiling the timeless utterance in her deeps;
 Few are the splendid moments of the seers.
 Heaven's call is rare, rarer the heart that heeds;
 The doors of light are sealed to common mind,
 And earth's needs nail to earth the human mass,
 Only in an uplifting hour of stress
 Men answer to the touch of greater things:
 Or, raised by some strong hand to breathe heaven-air,
 They slide back to the mud from which they climbed;
 In the mud of which they are made, whose law they know
 They joy in safe return to a friendly base,
 And, though something in them weeps for the glory lost

SAVITRI

And greatness murdered, they accept their fall.
 To be the common man they think the best,
 To live as others live is their delight.
 For most are built on Nature's earthly plan
 And owe small debt to a superior plane;
 The human average is their level pitch,
 A thinking animal's material range.
 In the long ever-mounting hierarchy,
 In the stark economy of cosmic life
 Each creature to its appointed task and place
 Is bound by his nature's form, his spirit's force.
 If this were easily disturbed, it would break
 The settled balance of created things;
 The perpetual order of the universe
 Would tremble, and a gap yawn in woven Fate.
 If men were not and all were brilliant gods,
 The mediating stair would then be lost
 By which the spirit awake in Matter winds
 Accepting the circuits of the Middle Way,
 By heavy toil and slow aeonic steps
 Reaching the bright miraculous fringe of God,
 Into the glory of the Oversoul.
 My will, my call is there in men and things;
 But the Inconscient lies at the world's grey back
 And draws to its breast of Night and Death and Sleep.
 Imprisoned in its dark and dumb abyss
 A little consciousness it lets escape
 But jealous of the growing light holds back
 Close to the obscure edges of its cave
 As if a fond ignorant mother kept her child
 Tied to her apron strings of Nescience.
 The Inconscient could not read without man's mind
 The mystery of the world its sleep has made:
 Man is its key to unlock a conscious door.
 But still it holds him dangled in its grasp:
 It draws its giant circle round its thoughts,
 It shuts its heart to the supernal Light,
 A high and dazzling limit shines above,
 A black and blinding border rules below:
 His mind is closed between two firmaments.

BOOK XI CANTO I

He seeks through words and images the Truth,
 And, poring on surfaces and brute outsides
 Or dipping cautious feet in shallow seas,
 Even his Knowledge is an Ignorance.
 He is barred out from his own inner depths;
 He cannot look on the face of the Unknown.
 How shall he see with the Omniscient's eyes,
 How shall he will with the Omnipotent's force?
 O too compassionate and eager Dawn,
 Leave to the circling aeons' tardy pace
 And to the working of the inconscient Will,
 Leave to its imperfect light the earthly race:
 All shall be done by the long act of Time.
 Although the race is bound by its own kind,
 The soul in man is greater than his fate:
 Above the wash and surge of Time and Space,
 Disengaging from the cosmic commonalty
 By which all life is kin in grief and joy,
 Delivered from the universal Law
 The sun-like single and transcendent spirit
 Can blaze its way through the mind's barrier wall
 And burn alone in the eternal sky,
 Inhabitant of a wide and endless calm.
 O Flame, withdraw into thy luminous self
 Or else return to thy original might
 On a seer-summit above thought and world;
 Partner of my unhoured eternity,
 Be one with the infinity of my power:
 For thou art the World Mother and the Bride.
 Out of the fruitless yearning of earth's life,
 Out of her feeble unconvincing dream,
 Recovering wings that cross infinity
 Pass back into the Power from which thou cam'st.
 To that thou canst uplift thy formless flight,
 Thy heart can rise from its unsatisfied beats
 And feel the immortal and spiritual joy
 Of a soul that never lost felicity.
 Lift up the fallen heart of love which flutters,
 Cast down desire's abyss into the gulfs.
 For ever rescued out of Nature's shapes

SAVITRI

Discover what the aimless cycles want,
 There intertwined with all thy life has meant,
 Here vainly sought in a terrestrial form.
 Break into eternity thy mortal mould;
 Melt, Lightning, into thy invisible flame.
 Clasp, Ocean, deep into thyself thy wave,
 Happy for ever in the embosoming surge.
 Grow one with the still passion of the depths,
 Then shalt thou know the Lover and the Loved,
 Leaving the limits dividing him and thee.
 Receive him into boundless Savitri,
 Lose thyself into infinite Satyavan,
 O miracle where thou beganst there cease!"

But Savitri answered to the radiant God:
 "In vain thou temptst with solitary bliss
 Two spirits saved out of a suffering world;
 My soul and his indissolubly linked
 In the one task for which our lives were born
 To raise the world to God in deathless Light,
 To bring God down to the world on earth we came,
 To change the earthly life to life divine.
 I keep my will to save the world and man;
 Even the charm of thy alluring voice,
 O blissful godhead, cannot seize and snare.
 I sacrifice not earth to happier worlds.
 Because there dwelt the Eternal's vast Idea
 And his dynamic will in men and things,
 So only could the enormous scene begin.
 Whence came this profitless wilderness of stars,
 This mighty barren wheeling of the suns?
 Who made the soul of futile life in Time,
 Planted a purpose and a hope in the heart,
 Set Nature to a huge and meaningless task
 Or planned her million-aoned effort's waste?
 What force condemned to birth and death and tears
 These conscious creatures crawling on the globe?
 If earth can look up to the light of heaven
 And hear an answer to her lonely cry,
 Not vain their meeting, nor heaven's touch a snare.

BOOK XI CANTO I

If thou and I are true, the world is true;
 Although thou hide thyself behind thy works,
 To be is not a senseless paradox;
 Since God has made earth, earth must make in her God;
 What hides within her breast she must reveal.
 I claim thee for the world that thou hast made.
 If man lives bound by his humanity,
 If he is tied for ever to his pain,
 Let a greater being then arise from man,
 The superhuman with the Eternal mate
 And the Immortal shine through earthly forms.
 Else were creation vain and this great world
 A nothing that in Time's moments seems to be.
 But I have seen through the insentient mask;
 I have felt a secret spirit stir in things
 Carrying the body of the growing God:
 It looks through veiling forms at veiless truth,
 It pushes back the curtain of the gods,
 It climbs towards its own eternity."
 But the god answered to the woman's heart:
 "O living power of the incarnate Word,
 All that the Spirit has dreamed thou canst create:
 Thou art the force by which I made the worlds,
 Thou art my vision and my will and voice.
 But knowledge too is thine, the world-plan thou knowest
 And the tardy process of the pace of Time.
 In the impetuous drive of thy heart of flame,
 In thy passion to deliver man and earth,
 Indignant at the impediments of Time
 And the slow evolution's sluggard steps,
 Lead not the spirit in an ignorant world
 To dare too soon the adventure of the Light,
 Pushing the bound and slumbering god in man
 Awakened mid the ineffable silences
 Into endless vistas of the unknown and unseen,
 Across the last confines of the limiting Mind
 And the Superconscient's perilous border line
 Into the danger of the Infinite.
 But if thou wilt not wait for Time and God,
 Do then thy work and force thy will on Fate.

SAVITRI

As I have taken from thee my load of night
 And taken from thee my twilight's doubts and dreams,
 So now I take my light of utter Day.
 These are my symbol kingdoms but not here
 Can the great choice be made that fixes fate
 Or uttered the sanction of the Voice supreme.
 Arise upon a ladder of greater worlds
 To the infinity where no world can be.
 But not in the wide air where a greater Life
 Uplifts its mystery and its miracle,
 And not on the luminous peaks of summit Mind,
 Or in the hold where subtle Matter's spirit
 Hides in its light of shimmering secrecies,
 Can there be heard the Eternal's firm command
 That joins the head of destiny to its base.
 These only are the mediating links;
 Not theirs is the originating sight
 Nor the fulfilling act or last support
 That bears perpetually the cosmic pile.
 Two are the Powers that hold the ends of Time;
 Spirit foresees, Matter unfolds its thought,
 The dumb executor of God's decrees,
 Omitting no iota and no dot,
 Agent unquestioning, inconscient, stark,
 Evolving inevitably a charged content,
 Intention of his force in time and space,
 In animate beings and inanimate things
 Immutably it fulfils its ordered task.
 It cancels not a tittle of things done;
 Unswerving from the oracular command
 It alters not the steps of the Unseen.
 If thou must indeed deliver man and earth
 On the spiritual heights, look down on life,
 Discover the truth of God and man and world;
 Then do thy task knowing and seeing all.
 Ascend, O soul, into thy timeless self;
 Choose destiny's curve and stamp thy will on Time."
 He ended and upon the falling sound
 A power went forth that shook the founded spheres
 And loosed the stakes that hold the tents of form.

BOOK XI CANTO I

Absolved from vision's grip and the folds of thought,
 Rapt from her sense like disappearing scenes
 In the stupendous theatre of Space
 The heaven-worlds vanished in spiritual light.
 A movement was abroad, a cry, a word,
 Beginningless in its vast discovery,
 Momentless in its unthinkable return:
 Choired in calm seas she heard the eternal Thought
 Rhythming itself abroad unutterably
 In spaceless orbits and on timeless roads.
 In an ineffable world she lived fulfilled.
 An energy of the triune Infinite,
 In a measureless Reality she dwelt,
 A rapture and a being and a force,
 A linked and myriad-motioned plenitude,
 A virgin unity, a luminous spouse,
 Housing a multitudinous embrace
 To marry all in God's immense delight,
 Bearing the eternity of every spirit,
 Bearing the burden of universal love,
 A wonderful mother of unnumbered souls.
 All things she knew, all things imagined or willed,
 Her ear was opened to ideal sound,
 Shape the convention bound no more her sight,
 A thousand doors of oneness was her heart,
 A crypt and sanctuary of brooding light
 Appeared, the last recess of things beyond.
 Then in its round the enormous fiat paused,
 Silence gave back to the Unknowable
 All it had given. Still was her listening thought.
 The form of things had ceased within her soul.
 Invisible that perfect godhead now.
 Around her some tremendous spirit lived,
 Mysterious flame around a melting pearl,
 And in the phantom of abolished Space
 There was a voice unheard by ears that cried:
 "Choose, spirit, thy supreme choice not given again;
 For now from my highest being looks at thee
 The nameless formless peace where all things rest.
 In a happy vast sublime cessation know,—

An immense extinction in eternity,
A point that disappears in the infinite,—
Felicity of the extinguished flame,
Last sinking of a wave in a boundless sea,
End of the trouble of thy wandering thoughts,
Close of the journeying of thy pilgrim soul.
Accept, O music, weariness of thy notes,
O stream, wide breaking of thy channel banks.”
The moments fell into eternity.
But someone yearned within a bosom unknown.
And silently the woman’s heart replied:
“Thy peace, O Lord, a boon within to keep
Amid the roar and ruin of wild Time
For the magnificent soul of man on earth.
Thy calm, O Lord, that bears thy hands of joy.”
Limitless like ocean round a lonely isle
A second time the eternal cry arose:
“Wide open are the ineffable gates in front.
My spirit leans down to break the knot of earth,
Amorous of oneness without thought or sign
To cast down wall and fence, to strip heaven bare,
See with the large eye of infinity,
Unweave the stars and into silence pass.”
In an immense and world-destroying pause
She heard a million creatures cry to her.
Through the tremendous stillness of her thoughts
Immeasurably the woman’s nature spoke:
“Thy oneness, Lord, in many approaching hearts,
My sweet infinity of thy numberless souls.”
Mightily retreating like a sea in ebb
A third time swelled the great admonishing call:
“I spread abroad the refuge of my wings.
Out of its incommunicable deeps
My power looks forth of mightiest splendour, stilled
Into its majesty of sleep, withdrawn
Above the dreadful whirlings of the world.”
A sob of things was answer to the voice,
And passionately the woman’s heart replied:
“Thy energy, Lord, to seize on woman and man,
To take all things and creatures in their grief

BOOK XI CANTO I

And gather them into a mother's arms."
 Solemn and distant like a seraph's lyre
 A last great time the warning sound was heard:
 "I open the wide eye of solitude
 To uncover the voiceless rapture of my bliss,
 Where in a pure and exquisite hush it lies
 Motionless in its slumber of ecstasy,
 Resting from the sweet madness of the dance
 Out of whose beat the throb of hearts was borne."
 Breaking the silence with appeal and cry
 A hymn of adoration tireless climbed,
 A music beat of winged uniting souls,
 Then all the woman yearningly replied:
 "Thy embrace which rends the living knot of pain,
 Thy joy, O Lord, in which all creatures breathe,
 Thy magic flowing waters of deep love,
 Thy sweetness give to me for earth and men."

Then after silence a still blissful cry
 Began, such as arose from the Infinite
 When the first whisperings of a strange delight
 Imagined in its deep the joy to seek,
 The passion to discover and to touch,
 The enamoured laugh which rhymed the chanting worlds:
 "O beautiful body of the incarnate Word,
 Thy thoughts are mine, I have spoken with thy voice.
 My will is thine, what thou hast chosen I choose.
 All thou hast asked I give to earth and men.
 All shall be written out in destiny's book
 By my trustee of thought and plan and act,
 The executor of my will, eternal Time.
 But since thou hast refused my maimless Calm
 And turned from my termless peace in which is expunged
 The visage of Space, and the shape of Time is lost,
 And from happy extinction of thy separate self
 In my uncompanioned lone eternity,—
 For not for thee the nameless worldless Nought,
 Annihilation of thy living soul
 And the end of thought and hope and life and love
 In the blank measureless Unknowable,—

SAVITRI

Because thou hast obeyed my timeless will
 I lay my hands upon thy soul of flame,
 I lay my hands upon thy heart of love,
 I yoke thee to my power of work in Time.
 Because thou hast obeyed my timeless will,
 Because thou hast chosen to share earth's struggle and fate
 And leaned in pity over earth-bound men
 And turned aside to help and yearned to save,
 I bind by thy heart's passion thy heart to mine
 And lay my splendid yoke upon thy soul.
 Now will I do in thee my marvellous works.
 I will fasten thy nature with my cords of strength,
 Subdue to my delight thy spirit's limbs
 And make thee a vivid knot of all my bliss,
 And build in thee my proud and crystal home.
 Thy days shall be my shafts of power and light,
 Thy nights my starry mysteries of joy
 And all my clouds lie tangled in thy hair
 And all my springtides marry in thy mouth.
 O Sun-Word, thou shalt raise the earth-soul to Light
 And bring down God into the lives of men;
 Earth shall be my work-chamber and my house,
 My garden of life to plant a seed divine.
 When all thy work in human time is done,
 The mind of earth shall be a home of light,
 The life of earth a tree growing towards heaven,
 The body of earth a tabernacle of God.
 Awakened from the mortal's ignorance
 Men shall be lit with the Eternal's ray
 And the glory of my sun-lift in their thoughts
 And feel in their hearts the sweetness of my love
 And in their acts my Power's miraculous drive.
 My will shall be the meaning of their days;
 Living for me, by me, in me they shall live.
 In the heart of my creation's mystery
 I will enact the drama of thy soul,
 Inscribe the long romance of Thee and Me.
 I will pursue thee across the century;
 Thou shalt be hunted through the world by love,
 Naked of ignorance' protecting veil

BOOK XI CANTO I

And without covert from my radiant gods
 No shape shall screen thee from my divine desire.
 Nowhere shalt thou escape my living eyes.
 In the nudity of thy discovered self
 In a bare identity with all that is,
 Disrobed of thy covering of humanity,
 Divested of the dense veil of human thought,
 Made one with every mind and body and heart,
 Made one with all nature and with self and God,
 Summing in thy single soul my mystic world
 I will possess in thee my universe,
 The universe find all I am in thee.
 Thou shalt bear all things that all things may change,
 Thou shalt fill all with my splendour and my bliss,
 Thou shalt meet all with my transmuting soul.
 Assailed by my infinitudes above,
 And quivering in immensities below,
 Pursued by me through my mind's wall-less vast,
 Oceanic with the surges of my life,
 A swimmer lost between two leaping seas
 By my outer pains and inner sweetnesses
 Finding my joy in my opposite mysteries
 Thou shalt respond to me from every nerve.
 A vision shall compel thy coursing breath,
 Thy heart shall drive thee on the wheel of works,
 Thy mind shall urge thee through the flames of thought,
 To meet me in the abyss and on the heights,
 To feel me in the tempest and the calm
 And love me in the noble and the vile,
 In beautiful things and terrible desire.
 The pains of hell shall be to thee my kiss,
 The flowers of heaven persuade thee with my touch.
 My fiercest masks shall my attractions bring.
 Music shall find thee in the voice of swords,
 Beauty pursue thee through the core of flame.
 Thou shalt know me in the rolling of the spheres
 And cross me in the atoms of the whirl.
 The wheeling forces of my universe
 Shall cry to thee the summons of my name.
 Delight shall drop down from my nectarous moon,

SAVITRI

My fragrance seize thee in the jasmine's snare,
 My eye shall look upon thee from the sun.
 Mirror of Nature's secret spirit made,
 Thou shalt reflect my hidden heart of joy,
 Thou shalt drink down my sweetness unalloyed
 In my pure lotus-cup of starry brim.
 My dreadful hands laid on thy bosom shall force
 Thy being bathed in fiercest longings' streams.
 Thou shalt discover the one and quivering note
 And cry, the harp of all my melodies,
 And roll, my foaming wave in seas of love.
 Even my disasters' clutch shall be to thee
 The ordeal of my rapture's contrary shape:
 In pain's self shall smile on thee my secret face:
 Thou shalt bear my ruthless beauty unabridged
 Amid the world's intolerable wrongs,
 Trampled by the violent misdeeds of Time
 Cry out to the ecstasy of my rapture's touch.
 All beings shall be to thy life my emissaries;
 Drawn to me on the bosom of thy friend,
 Compelled to meet me in thy enemy's eyes,
 My creatures shall demand me from thy heart.
 Thou shalt not shrink from any brother soul.
 Thou shalt be attracted helplessly to all.
 Men seeing thee shall feel my hands of joy,
 In sorrow's pangs feel steps of the world's delight,
 Their life experience its tumultuous shock
 In the mutual craving of two opposites.
 Hearts touched by thy love shall answer to my call,
 Discover the ancient music of the spheres
 In the revealing accents of thy voice,
 And nearer draw to me because thou art:
 Enamoured of thy spirit's loveliness
 They shall embrace my body in thy soul,
 Hear in thy life the beauty of my laugh,
 Know the thrilled bliss with which I made the worlds.
 All that thou hast, shall be for other's bliss,
 All that thou art, shall to my hands belong.
 I will pour delight from thee as from a jar,
 I will whirl thee as my chariot through the ways,

BOOK XI CANTO I

I will use thee as my sword and as my lyre,
 I will play on thee my minstrelsies of thought.
 And when thou art vibrant with all ecstasy,
 And when thou livst one spirit with all things,
 Then will I spare thee not my living fires,
 But make thee a channel for my timeless force.
 My hidden presence led thee unknowing on
 From thy beginning in earth's voiceless bosom
 Through life and pain and time and will and death,
 Through outer shocks and inner silences
 Along the mystic roads of Space and Time
 To the experience which all Nature hides.
 Who hunts and seizes me, my captive grows:
 This shalt thou henceforth learn from thy heart-beats.
 For ever love, O beautiful slave of God!
 O lasso of my rapture's widening noose,
 Become my cord of universal love.
 The spirit ensnared by thee force to delight
 Of creation's oneness sweet and fathomless,
 Compelled to embrace my myriad unities
 And all my endless forms and divine souls.
 O Mind, grow full of the eternal peace;
 O Word, cry out the immortal litany:
 Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.

"Descend to life with him thy heart desires.
 O Satyavan, O luminous Savitri,
 I sent you forth of old beneath the stars,
 A dual power of God in an ignorant world,
 In a hedged creation shut from limitless self,
 Bringing down God to the insentient glow,
 Lifting earth-beings to immortality.
 In the world of my knowledge and my ignorance
 Where God is unseen and only is heard a Name
 And knowledge is trapped in the boundaries of mind
 And life is hauled in the drag-net of desire
 And Matter hides the soul from its own sight,
 You are my Force at work to uplift earth's fate,
 My self that moves up the immense incline
 Between the extremes of the spirit's night and day.

SAVITRI

He is my soul that climbs from nescient Night
 Through life and mind and supernature's Vast
 To the supernal light of Timelessness
 And my eternity hid in moving Time
 And my boundlessness cut by the curve of Space.
 It climbs to the greatness it has left behind
 And to the beauty and joy from which it fell,
 To the closeness and sweetness of all things divine,
 To light without bounds and life illimitable,
 Taste of the depths of the Ineffable's bliss,
 Touch of the immortal and the infinite.
 He is my soul that gropes out of the beast
 To reach humanity's heights of lucent thought,
 And the vicinity of Truth's sublime.
 He is the godhead growing in human lives
 And in the body of earth-being's forms,
 He is the soul of man climbing to God
 In Nature's surge out of earth's ignorance.
 O Savitri, thou art my spirit's Power,
 The revealing voice of my immortal Word,
 The face of Truth upon the roads of Time
 Pointing to the souls of men the routes to God.
 While the dim light from the veiled Spirit's peak
 Falls upon Matter's stark inconscient sleep
 As if a pale moonbeam on a dense glade,
 And Mind in a half-light moves amid half-truths
 And the human heart knows only human love
 And life is a stumbling and imperfect force
 And the body counts out its precarious days,
 You shall be born into man's dubious hours
 In forms that hide the soul's divinity
 And show through veils of the earth's doubting air
 My glory breaking as through clouds a sun,
 Or burning like a rare and inward fire,
 And with my nameless influence fill men's lives.
 Yet shall they look up as to peaks of God
 And feel God like a circumambient air
 And rest on God as on a motionless base.
 Yet shall there glow on mind like a horned moon
 The spirit's crescent splendour in pale skies

BOOK XI CANTO I

And light man's life upon his Godward road.
 But more there is concealed in God's Beyond
 That shall one day reveal its hidden face.
 Now mind is all and its uncertain ray,
 Mind is the leader of the body and life,
 Mind the thought-driven chariot of the soul
 Carrying the luminous wanderer in the night
 To vistas of a far uncertain dawn,
 To the end of the Spirit's fathomless desire,
 To its dream of absolute truth and utter bliss.
 There are greater destinies mind cannot surmise
 Fixed on the summit of the evolving Path
 The Traveller now treads in the Ignorance,
 Unaware of his next step, not knowing his goal.
 Mind is not all his tireless climb can reach,
 There is a fire on the apex of the worlds,
 There is a house of the Eternal's Light.
 There is an infinite truth, an absolute power.
 The spirit's mightiness shall cast off its mask;
 Its greatness shall be felt shaping the world's course.
 It shall be seen in its own veiless beams,
 A star rising from the Inconscient's night,
 A sun climbing to Supernature's peak.
 Abandoning the dubious Middle Way
 A few shall glimpse the miraculous Origin
 And some shall feel in you the secret Force
 And they shall turn to meet a nameless tread,
 Adventurers into a mightier Day.
 Ascending out of the limiting breadths of mind,
 They shall discover the world's huge design
 And step into the Truth, the Right, the Vast.
 You shall reveal to them the hidden eternities,
 The breath of infinitudes not yet revealed,
 Some rapture of the bliss that made the world,
 Some rush of the force of God's omnipotence,
 Some beam of the omniscient Mystery.
 But when the hour of the Divine draws near,
 The Mighty Mother shall take birth in Time
 And God be born into the human clay
 In forms made ready by your human lives.

SAVITRI

Then shall the Truth supreme be given to men.
 There is a being beyond the being of mind,
 An Immeasurable cast into many forms,
 A miracle of the multitudinous One.
 There is a consciousness mind cannot touch,
 Its speech cannot utter nor its thought reveal.
 It has no home on earth, no centre in man,
 Yet is the source of all things thought and done,
 The fount of the creation and its works.
 It is the originer of all truth here,
 The sun-orb of mind's fragmentary rays,
 Infinity's heaven that spills the rain of God,
 The Immense that calls to man to expand the Spirit
 The wide Aim that justifies his narrow attempts,
 A channel for the little he tastes of bliss.
 Some shall be made the glory's receptacles
 And vehicles of the Eternal's luminous power.
 These are the high forerunners, the heads of Time,
 The great deliverers of earth-bound mind,
 The high transfigurers of human clay,
 The first-born of a new supernal race.
 The incarnate dual Power shall open God's door,
 Eternal supermind touch earthly Time.
 The superman shall wake in mortal man
 And manifest the hidden demi-god
 Or grow into the God-Light and God-Force
 Revealing the secret deity in the cave.
 Then shall the earth be touched by the Supreme,
 His bright unveiled Transcendence shall illumine
 The mind and heart, and force the life and act
 To interpret his inexpressible mystery
 In a heavenly alphabet of Divinity's signs.
 His living cosmic spirit shall enring,
 Annulling the decree of death and pain,
 Erasing the formulas of the Ignorance,
 With the deep meaning of beauty and life's hid sense,
 The being ready for immortality,
 His regard crossing infinity's mystic waves
 Bring back to Nature her early joy to live,
 The metred heart-beats of a lost delight,

BOOK XI CANTO I

The cry of a forgotten ecstasy,
 The dance of the first world-creating Bliss.
 The Immanent shall be the witness God
 Watching on his many-petalled lotus-throne,
 His actionless being and his silent might
 Ruling earth-nature by eternity's law,
 A thinker waking the Inconscient's world,
 An immobile centre of many infinitudes
 In his thousand-pillared temple by Time's sea.
 Then shall the embodied being live as one
 Who is a thought, a will of the Divine,
 A mask or robe of his divinity,
 An instrument and partner of his Force,
 A point or line drawn in the infinite,
 A manifest of the Imperishable.
 The supermind shall be his nature's fount,
 The Eternal's truth shall mould his thoughts and acts,
 The Eternal's truth shall be his light and guide.
 All then shall change, a magic order come
 Overtopping this mechanical universe.
 A mightier race shall inhabit the mortal's world.
 On Nature's luminous tops, on the Spirit's ground,
 The superman shall reign as king of life,
 Make earth almost the mate and peer of heaven
 And lead towards God and truth man's ignorant heart
 And lift towards godhead his mortality.
 A power released from circumscribing bounds,
 Its height pushed up beyond death's hungry reach,
 Life's tops shall flame with the Immortal's thoughts,
 Light shall invade the darkness of its base.
 Then in the process of evolving Time
 All shall be drawn into a single plan,
 A divine harmony shall be earth's law,
 Beauty and Joy remould her way to live:
 Even the body shall remember God,
 Nature shall draw back from mortality
 And Spirit's fires shall guide the earth's blind force;
 Knowledge shall bring into the aspirant Thought
 A high proximity to Truth and God.
 The supermind shall claim the world for Light

And thrill with love of God the enamoured heart
 And place Light's crown on Nature's lifted head
 And found Light's reign on her unshaking base.
 A greater truth than earth's shall roof-in earth
 And shed its sunlight on the roads of mind;
 A power infallible shall lead the thought,
 A seeing Puissance govern life and act,
 In earthly hearts kindle the Immortal's fire.
 A soul shall wake in the Inconscient's house;
 The mind shall be God-vision's tabernacle,
 The body intuition's instrument,
 And life a channel for God's visible power.
 All earth shall be the Spirit's manifest home,
 Hidden no more by the body and the life,
 Hidden no more by the mind's ignorance;
 An unerring Hand shall shape event and act.
 The Spirit's eyes shall look through Nature's eyes,
 The Spirit's force shall occupy Nature's force.
 This world shall be God's visible garden-house,
 The earth shall be a field and camp of God,
 Man shall forget consent to mortality
 And his embodied frail impermanence.
 This universe shall unseal its occult sense,
 Creation's process change its antique front,
 An ignorant evolution's hierarchy
 Release the Wisdom chained below its base:
 The Spirit shall be the master of his world
 Lurking no more in form's obscurity
 And Nature shall reverse her action's rule,
 The outward world disclose the Truth it veils;
 All things shall manifest the covert God,
 All shall reveal the Spirit's light and might
 And move to its destiny of felicity.
 Even should a hostile force cling to its reign
 And claim its right's perpetual sovereignty
 And man refuse his high spiritual fate,
 Yet shall the secret Truth in things prevail.
 For in the march of all-fulfilling Time
 The hour must come of the Transcendent's will:
 All turns and winds towards his predestined ends

BOOK XI CANTO I

In Nature's fixed inevitable course
 Decreed since the beginning of the worlds
 In the deep essence of created things:
 Even there shall come as a high crown of all
 The end of Death, the death of Ignorance.
 But first high Truth must set her feet on earth
 And man aspire to the Eternal's light
 And all his members feel the Spirit's touch
 And all his life obey an inner Force.
 This too shall be; for a new life shall come,
 A body of the Superconscient's truth,
 A native field of Supernature's might:
 It shall make earth's nescient ground Truth's colony,
 Make even the Ignorance a transparent robe
 Through which shall shine the brilliant limbs of Truth
 And Truth shall be a sun on Nature's head
 And Truth shall be the guide of Nature's steps
 And Truth shall gaze out of her nether deeps.
 When superman is born as Nature's king
 His presence shall transfigure Matter's world:
 He shall light up Truth's fire in Nature's night,
 He shall lay upon the earth Truth's greater law;
 Man too shall turn towards the Spirit's call.
 Awake to his hidden possibility,
 Awake to all that slept within his heart
 And all that Nature meant when earth was formed
 And the Spirit made this ignorant world his home,
 He shall aspire to Truth and God and Bliss.
 Interpreter of a diviner law
 And instrument of a supreme design
 The higher kind shall lean to lift up man.
 Man shall desire to climb to his own heights.
 The truth above shall wake a nether truth;
 Even the dumb earth become a sentient force.
 The Spirit's tops and Nature's base shall draw
 Near to the secret of their separate truth
 And know each other as one deity.
 The Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze
 And Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.
 Then man and superman shall be at one

SAVITRI

And all the earth become a single life.
 Even the multitude shall hear the Voice
 And turn to commune with the Spirit within
 And strive to obey the high spiritual law:
 This earth shall stir with impulses sublime,
 Humanity awake to deepest self,
 Nature the hidden godhead recognise.
 Even the many shall some answer make
 And bear the splendour of the Divine's rush
 And his impetuous knock at unseen doors.
 A heavenlier passion shall upheave men's lives,
 Their mind shall share in the ineffable gleam,
 Their heart shall feel the ecstasy and the fire,
 Earth's bodies shall be conscious of a soul;
 Mortality's bond-slaves shall unloose their bonds,
 Mere men into spiritual beings grow
 And see awake the dumb divinity.
 Intuitive beams shall touch the nature's peaks,
 A revelation stir the nature's depths:
 The Truth shall be the leader of their lives,
 Truth shall dictate their thought and speech and act,
 They shall feel themselves lifted nearer to the sky,
 As if a little lower than the gods.
 For knowledge shall pour down its radiant streams
 And even darkened mind quiver with new life
 And kindle and burn with the Ideal's fire
 And turn to escape from mortal ignorance.
 The frontiers of the Ignorance shall recede,
 More and more souls shall enter into light,
 Minds lit, inspired, the occult summoner hear
 And lives blaze with a sudden inner flame
 And hearts grow enamoured of divine delight
 And human wills tune to the divine will,
 These separate selves the Spirit's oneness feel,
 These senses of heavenly sense grow capable,
 The flesh and nerves of a strange ethereal joy
 And mortal bodies of immortality.
 A divine force shall flow through tissue and cell
 And take the charge of breath and speech and act
 And all the thoughts shall be a glow of suns

BOOK XI CANTO I

And every feeling a celestial thrill.
 Often a lustrous inner dawn shall come
 Lighting the chambers of the slumbering mind;
 A sudden bliss shall run through every limb
 And Nature with a mightier Presence fill.
 Thus shall the earth open to divinity
 And common natures feel the wide uplift,
 Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray
 And meet the deity in common things.
 Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
 The Spirit shall take up the human play,
 This earthly life become the life divine."

The measure of that subtle music ceased.
 Down with a hurried swimming floating lapse
 Through unseen worlds and bottomless spaces forced
 Sank like a star the soul of Savitri.
 Amidst a laughter of unearthly lyres
 She heard around her nameless voices cry
 Triumphant, an innumerable sound.
 A choir of laughing winds to meet her came.
 She bore the burden of infinity
 And felt the stir of all ethereal space.
 Pursuing her in her fall, implacably sweet,
 A face was over her which seemed a youth's,
 Symbol of all the beauty eyes see not,
 Crowned as with peacock plumes of gorgeous hue
 Framing a sapphire, whose heart-disturbing smile
 Insatiably attracted to delight,
 Voluptuous to the embraces of her soul.
 Changed in its shape, yet rapturously the same,
 It grew a woman's dark and beautiful
 Like a mooned night with drifting star-gemmed clouds,
 A shadowy glory and a stormy depth,
 Turbulent in will and terrible in love.
 Eyes in which Nature's blind ecstatic life
 Sprang from some spirit's passionate content,
 Missioned her to the whirling dance of earth.
 Amidst the headlong rapture of her fall
 Held like a bird in a child's satisfied hands,

In an enamoured grasp her spirit strove
 Admitting no release till Time should end,
 And, as the fruit of the mysterious joy,
 She kept within her strong embosoming soul
 Like a flower hidden in the heart of spring
 The soul of Satyavan drawn down by her
 Inextricably in that mighty lapse.
 Invisible heavens in a thronging flight
 Soared past her as she fell. Then all the blind
 And near attraction of the earth compelled
 Fearful rapidities of downward bliss.
 Lost in the giddy proneness of that speed,
 Whirled, sinking, overcome she disappeared
 Like a leaf spinning from the tree of heaven,
 In broad unconsciousness as in a pool;
 A hospitable softness drew her in
 Into a wonder of miraculous depths,
 Above her closed a darkness of great wings
 And she was buried in a mother's breast.

Then from a timeless plane that watches Time,
 A Spirit gazed out upon destiny,
 In its endless moment saw the ages pass.
 All still was in a silence of the gods.
 The prophet moment covered limitless space
 And cast into the heart of hurrying Time
 A diamond light of the Eternal's peace,
 A crimson seed of God's felicity;
 A glance from the gaze fell of undying Love.
 A wonderful face looked out with deathless eyes;
 A hand was seen drawing the golden bars
 That guard the imperishable secrecies.
 A key turned in a mystic lock of Time.
 But where the silence of the gods had passed,
 A greater harmony from the stillness born
 Surprised with joy and sweetness yearning hearts,
 An ecstasy and a laughter and a cry.
 A power leaned down, a happiness found its home.
 Over wide earth brooded the infinite bliss.

END OF BOOK ELEVEN

BOOK TWELVE

Epilogue



EPILOGUE

THE RETURN TO EARTH

OUT of abysmal trance her spirit woke.

Lain on the earth-mother's calm unconscious breast
 She saw the green-clad branches lean above
 Guarding her sleep with their enchanted life,
 And overhead a blue-winged ecstasy
 Fluttered from bough to bough with high-pitched call.
 Into the magic secrecy of the woods
 Peering through an emerald lattice-window of leaves,
 In indolent skies reclined, the thinning day
 Turned to its slow fall into evening's peace.
 She pressed the living body of Satyavan:
 On her body's wordless joy to be and breathe
 She bore the blissful burden of his head
 Between her breasts' warm labour of delight,
 The waking gladness of her members felt
 The weight of heaven in his limbs, a touch
 Summing the whole felicity of things,
 And all her life was conscious of his life
 And all her being rejoiced enfolding his.
 The immense remoteness of her trance had passed;
 Human she was once more, earth's Savitri,
 Yet felt in her illimitable change.
 A power dwelt in her soul too great for earth,
 A bliss lived in her heart too large for heaven.
 Light too intense for thought and love too boundless
 For earth's emotions lit her skies of mind
 And spread through her deep and happy seas of soul.
 All that is sacred in the world drew near
 To her divine passivity of mood.
 A marvellous voice of silence breathed its thoughts.

SAVITRI

All things in time and space she had taken for hers;
 In her they moved, by her they lived and were,
 The whole wide world clung to her for delight,
 Created for her rapt embrace of love.
 Now in her spaceless self released from bounds
 Unnumbered years seemed moments long drawn out,
 The brilliant time-flakes of eternity.
 Outwings of a bird from its bright home,
 Her earthly morns were radiant flights of joy.
 Boundless she was, a form of infinity.
 Absorbed no longer by the moment's beat
 Her spirit the unending future felt
 And lived with all the unbeginning past.
 Her life was a dawn's victorious opening,
 The past and unborn days had joined their dreams,
 Old vanished eves and far arriving noons
 Hinted to her a vision of prescient hours.
 Supine in musing bliss she lay awhile
 Given to the wonder of a waking trance;
 Half-risen then she sent her gaze around,
 As if to recover old sweet trivial threads,
 Old happy thoughts, small treasured memories,
 And weave them into one immortal day.
 Ever she held on the paradise of her breast
 Her lover charmed into a fathomless sleep,
 Lain like an infant spirit unaware
 Lulled on the verge of two consenting worlds.
 But soon she leaned down over her loved to call
 His mind back to her with her travelling touch
 On his closed eyelids; settled was her still look
 Of strong delight, not yearning now, but large
 With limitless joy or sovereign last content,
 Pure, passionate with the passion of the gods.
 Desire stirred not its wings; for all was made
 An overarching of celestial rays
 Like the absorbed control of sky on plain,
 Heaven's leaning down to embrace from all sides earth,
 A quiet rapture, a vast security.
 Then sighing to her touch the soft-winged sleep
 Rose hovering from his flower-like lids and flew

BOOK XII—EPILOGUE

Murmurous away. Awake, he found her eyes
 Waiting for his, and felt her hands, and saw
 The earth his home given back to him once more
 And her made his again, his passion's all.
 With his arms' encircling hold around her locked,
 A living knot to make possession close,
 He murmured with hesitating lips her name,
 And vaguely recollecting wonder cried,
 "Whence hast thou brought me captive back, love-chained,
 To thee and sun-light's walls, O golden beam
 And casket of all sweetness, Savitri,
 Godhead and woman, moonlight of my soul?
 For surely I have travelled in strange worlds
 By thee companioned, a pursuing spirit,
 Together we have disdained the gates of night;
 I have turned away from the celestial's joy
 And heaven's insufficient without thee.
 Where now has passed that formidable Shape
 Which rose against us? the Spirit of the Void,
 Claiming the world for Death and Nothingness,
 Denying God and Soul? Or was all a dream
 Or a vision seen in a spiritual sleep,
 A symbol of the oppositions of Time
 Or a mind-lit beacon of significance
 In some stress of darkness lighting on the Way
 Or guiding a swimmer through the straits of Death,
 Or finding with the succour of its ray
 In a gully mid the crowded streets of Chance
 The soul that into the world-adventure came,
 A scout and voyager from Eternity?"
 But she replied, "Our parting was the dream;
 We are together, we live, O Satyavan.
 Look round thee and behold, glad and unchanged
 Our home, this forest, with its thousand cries
 And the whisper of the wind among the leaves
 And, through rifts in emerald scene, the evening sky,
 God's canopy of blue sheltering our lives,
 And the birds crying for heart's happiness,
 Winged poets of our solitary reign,
 Our friends on earth where we are king and queen.

SAVITRI

Only our souls have left Death's night behind
 Changed by a mighty dream's reality,
 Illumined by the light of symbol worlds
 And the stupendous summit self of things,
 And stood at Godhead's gates limitless, free."

Then filled with the glory of their happiness
 They rose and with safe clinging fingers locked
 Hung on each other in a silent look.
 But he with a new wonder in his heart
 And a new flame of worship in his eyes:
 "What high change is in thee, O Savitri? Bright
 Ever thou wast, a goddess still and pure,
 Yet dearer to me by thy sweet human parts
 Earth gave thee making thee yet more divine.
 My adoration mastered, my desire
 Bent down to make its subject, my daring clasped,
 Claiming by body and soul my life's estate,
 Rapture's possession, love's sweet property,
 A statue of silence in my templed spirit,
 A yearning godhead and a golden bride.
 But now thou seemst almost too high and great
 For mortal worship; Time lies below thy feet
 And the whole world seems only a part of thee,
 Thy presence the hushed heaven I inhabit,
 And thou lookst on me in the gaze of the stars,
 Yet art the earthly keeper of my soul,
 My life a whisper of thy dreaming thoughts,
 My morns a gleaming of thy spirit's wings,
 And day and night are of thy beauty part.
 Hast thou not taken my heart to treasure it
 In the secure environment of thy breast?
 Awakened from the silence and the sleep,
 I have consented for thy sake to be.
 By thee I have greatened my mortal arc of life,
 But now far heaven's unmapped infinitudes
 Thou hast brought me thy illimitable gift.
 If to fill these thou lift thy sacred flight,
 My human earth will still demand thy bliss:
 Make still my life through thee a song of joy
 And all my silence wide and deep with thee."

BOOK XII—EPILOGUE

A heavenly queen consenting to his will,
 She clasped his feet by her enshrining hair
 Enveloped in a velvet cloak of love,
 And answered softly like a murmuring lute:
 "All now is changed, yet all is still the same.
 Lo, we have looked upon the face of God,
 Our life has opened with divinity.
 We have borne identity with the Supreme
 And known his meaning in our mortal lives.
 Our love has grown greater by that mighty touch
 And learnt its heavenly significance,
 Yet nothing is lost of mortal love's delight.
 Heaven's touch fulfils but cancels not our earth:
 Our bodies need each other in the same last;
 Still in our breasts repeat heavenly secret rhythm
 Our human heart-beats passionately close.
 Still am I she who came to thee mid the murmur
 Of sunlit leaves upon this forest verge;
 I am the Madran, I am Savitri.
 All that I was before, I am to thee still,
 Close comrade of thy thoughts and hopes and toils,
 All happy contraries I would join for thee.
 All sweet relations marry in our life,
 I am thy kingdom even as thou art mine,
 The sovereign and the slave of thy desire,
 Thy prone possessor, the sister of thy soul
 And mother of thy wants; thou art my world,
 The earth I need, the heaven my thoughts desire,
 The world I inhabit and the god I adore.
 Thy body is my body's counterpart
 Whose every limb my answering limb desires,
 Whose heart is key to all my heart-beats,—this
 I am and thou to me, O Satyavan.
 Our wedded walk through life begins anew,
 No gladness lost, no depth of mortal joy;
 Let us go through this new world that is the same.
 For it is given back, but it is known,
 A playing ground and dwelling house of God
 Who hides himself in bird and beast and man
 Sweetly to find himself again by love,

SAVITRI

By oneness. His presence leads the rhythms of life
 That seek for mutual joy in spite of pain.
 We have each other found, O Satyavan,
 In the great light of the discovered soul.
 Let us go back, for eve is in the skies.
 Now grief is dead and serene bliss remains
 The heart of all our days for ever more.
 Lo, all these beings in this wonderful world!
 Let us give joy to all, for joy is ours.
 For not for ourselves alone our spirits came
 Out of the veil of the Unmanifest,
 Out of the deep immense Unknowable
 On the ignorant breast of dubious earth
 Into the ways of labouring, seeking men,
 Two fires that burn towards that parent Sun,
 Two rays that travel to the original Light.
 To lead man's soul towards Truth and God we are born,
 To draw the chequered scheme of mortal life
 Into some semblance of the Immortal's plan,
 To shape it closer to an image of God,
 A little nearer to the Idea divine."
 She closed her arms about his breast and head
 As if to keep him on her bosom worn
 For ever through the journeying of the years.
 So for a while they stood entwined, their kiss
 And passion-tranced embrace a meeting point
 In their commingling spirits, one for ever,
 Two-souled, two-bodied for the joys of time.
 Then hand in hand they left that solemn place
 Full now of mute unusual memories,
 To the green distance of their sylvan home
 Returning slowly through the forest's heart:
 Round them the afternoon to evening changed;
 Light slipped down to the brightly sleeping verge,
 And the birds came back winging to their nests,
 And day and night leaned to each other's arms.

Now the dusk shadowy trees stood close around
 Like dreaming spirits and delaying night,
 The grey-eyed pensive evening heard their steps,

BOOK XII—EPILOGUE

And from all points the cries and movements came
 Of the four-footed wanderers of the night
 Approaching. Then a human rumour rose
 Long alien to their solitary days,
 Invading the charmed wilderness of leaves,
 Once sacred to secluded loneliness,
 With violent breaking of its virgin sleep.
 Through the screened dusk it deepened still and there neared
 Floating of many voices and the sound
 Of many feet till on their sight broke in,
 As if a coloured wave upon the eye,
 The brilliant strenuous crowded life of man.
 Topped by a flaring multitude of lights
 A great resplendent company arrived.
 Life in its ordered tumult wavering came
 Bringing its stream of unknown faces, thronged
 With gold-fringed headdresses, gold-broidered robes,
 Glittering of ornaments, fluttering of hems,
 Hundreds of hands parted the forest-boughs,
 Hundreds of eyes searched the entangled glades.
 Calm white-clad priests their grave-eyed sweetness brought,
 Strong warriors in their glorious armour shone,
 The proud-hooved steeds came trampling through the wood.
 In front King Dyumathsena walked, no more
 Blind, faltering limbed, but his far-questing eyes
 Restored to all their confidence in light
 Took seeingly this imaged outer world;
 Firmly he trod with monarch steps the soil.
 By him that queen and mother's anxious face
 Came changed from its habitual burdened look
 Which in its drooping strength of tired toil
 Had borne the fallen life of those she loved.
 Her patient paleness wore a pensive glow
 Like evening's subdued gaze of gathered light
 Departing, which foresees sunrise her child.
 The brilliance of her rich receding gleam
 A thoughtful prophecy of lyric dawn,
 She lives awhile to muse upon that hope
 Sinking in quiet splendours of her sky.
 Her eyes were first to find her children's forms.

SAVITRI

But at the vision of the beautiful twain
 The air awoke perturbed with scaling cries,
 And the swift parents hurrying to their child,—
 Their cause of life now who had given him breath,—
 Possessed him with their arms. Then tenderly
 Cried Dyumathsena chiding Satyavan:
 "The fortunate gods have looked on me today,
 A kingdom seeking came and heaven's rays.
 But where wast thou? Thou hast tormented gladness
 With fear's dull shadow, O my child, my life.
 What danger kept thee for the darkening woods?
 Or how could pleasure in her ways forget
 That useless orbs without thee are my eyes
 Which only for thy sake rejoice at light.
 Not like thyself was this done, Savitri,
 Who ledst not back thy husband to our arms,
 Knowing with him beside me only is taste
 In food and for his touch evening and morn
 I live content with my remaining days."
 But Satyavan replied with smiling lips,
 "Lay all on her; she is the cause of all.
 With her enchantments she has twined me round.
 Behold, at noon leaving this house of clay
 I wandered in far-off eternities,
 Yet still, a captive in her golden hands,
 I tread your little hillock called green earth
 And in the moments of your transient sun
 Live glad among the busy works of men."
 Then all eyes turned their wondering looks where stood
 A deepening redder gold upon her cheeks,
 With lowered lids the noble lovely child,
 And one consenting thought moved every breast:
 "What gleaming marvel of the earth or skies
 Stands silently by human Satyavan
 To mark a brilliance in the dusk of eve?
 If this is she of whom the world has heard,
 Wonder no more at any happy change.
 Each easy miracle of felicity
 Of her transmuting heart the alchemy is."
 Then one spoke there who seemed a priest and sage,

BOOK XII—EPILOGUE

"O woman soul, what light, what power revealed,
 Working the rapid marvels of this day,
 Opens for us by thee a happier age?"
 Her lashes fluttering upwards gathered in
 To a vision which had scanned immortal things,
 Rejoicing, human forms for their delight.
 They claimed for their deep childlike motherhood
 The life of all these souls to be her life,
 Then falling veiled the light. Low she replied,
 "Awakened to the meaning of my heart
 That to feel love and oneness is to live
 And this the magic of our golden change
 Is all the truth I know or seek, O sage."
 Wondering at her and her too luminous words
 Westward they turned in the fast gathering night.

From the entangling verges freed they came
 Into a dimness of the sleeping earth
 And travelled through her faint and slumbering plains.
 Murmur and movement and the tread of men
 Broke the night's solitude. The neigh of steeds
 Rose from the indistinct and voiceful sea
 Of life and all along its marchings swelled
 The rhyme of hooves, the chariot's homeward voice.
 Drawn by white manes upon a high-roofed car
 In flare of the unsteady torches went
 With linked hands Satyavan and Savitri,
 Hearing a marriage march and nuptial hymn,
 Where waited them the many-voiced human world.
 Numberless the stars swam on their shadowy field
 Describing in the gloom the ways of light.
 Then while they skirted yet the southward verge,
 Lost in the halo of her musing brows
 Night, splendid with the moon dreaming in heaven
 In silver peace, possessed her luminous reign.
 She brooded through her stillness on a thought
 Deep-guarded by her mystic folds of light,
 And in her bosom nursed a greater dawn.

END OF BOOK TWELVE



